



FAITH BIBLE COLLEGE

2 Timothy 2:15

*"Study to show thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needs not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth."*

DYNAMICS OF PRAYER



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*"Leaders are those whose aroma lingers long after they have completed
the task and others who sniff it, wants to be like them"*

*"Leadership is not a title but a Function
& that Function pulls you to its Position
& the Position determines your Title"*

*Blessings & Graceful Studying
Professor Ronnie Moodley*

DYNAMICS OF PRAYER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 3
• The Wrong Definition of Prayer	3
WHAT IS PRAYER?	Page 5
• Prayer is conversation with God	6
• Practicing the Presence of God	7
• Relationship with God	8
WHY SHOULD WE PRAYER?	Page 11
HOW SHOULD WE PRAYER?	Page 18
• Know who you are praying to	18
• Prayer in the Holy Spirit and in the understanding	28
• Physical posture in prayer	29
• Pray with authority	31
WHEN SHOULD WE PRAYER?	Page 33
SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN PRAYER	Page 35
• Does God hear and answer prayer?	35
• Hindrances to effective prayer	38
• Conditions for success	44
TYPES OF PRAYER	Page 65
• Adoration	65
• Confession	71
1. Of sin	72
2. Of the Word of God	82
• Thanksgiving	91
• Supplication	95

INTERCESSION AND PRAYER

Page 105

- What is it? 105
- Biblical Foundation of Intercession 106
- Characteristics of Intercession 108
- 2 Aspects of Intercession 110
- Role of Intercession in evangelism 115
- Prayer walking the neighborhood 120
- Power of Agreement 123

PRAYER AND FASTING

Page 125

- Occasion for fasting 127
- Why do we fast today? 128
- Guidelines concerning fasting 129
- How to begin your fast 131

NOTABLE PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE

Page 133

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Page 136

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this course is to bring the learner to an understanding of what prayer really is.

WRONG DEFINITIONS OF PRAYER

Prayer has often been misunderstood by many and therefore as a result has become ineffectual and powerless. Many people have incorrectly viewed prayer as being:

Something that they are to memorize and repeat: However prayer is to be from the heart of a person. Prayer is to express the heart of man to God. Matthew 6:7 says, "When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered only by repeating their words again and again".

Something that is "make believe": Prayer is not make-believe. It is not a "wish" that we hope someone is hearing our prayers and might answer us, but it is a reality. Prayer is real because we are praying to a God who is real!

Something that we do to show that we are righteous: Prayer is not a sign of righteousness. Often people believe that if they spend more time in the prayer closet than any other person that they will be more righteous than them. This is incorrect, prayer is not a "work" that we do in order to get us into heaven, but it is a relationship with Abba Father.

Something that is a means to an end: Prayer is a healthy action in and of itself because, through it, we communicate with our Source and experience completion. If you view prayer merely as a way to get something, you reduce it to a one-dimensional, self-centered practice, and will surely be unfulfilled when your requests aren't answered in just the way you want. Prayer should be cherished for its benefit at the very moment it is experienced, not for what it can do in the future.

Something that is passive: It is certainly true that one of the benefits of prayer is an increase in tranquility. During prayer, we gain calm and insight, and therefore are often able to reduce the scattered thoughts in our harried minds. However, to view prayer as passive is to miss out on a large part of the prayer experience. Turning to God in prayer necessarily takes zeal and effort. That's why prayer is often referred to as the "exercise of the spirit." That does not mean that our muscles start moving, but our spirit does. The power of prayer enlivens our spirits,

awakening our creativity and stimulating our desire for change. We have learned that God inspires prayer. Yet your response to God is *your* choice, not something that just happens to you. Thus, though prayer may be a relaxing practice in the way that it encourages physical and mental peace, it is nonetheless a practice—a chosen activity that includes your active participation. It involves remaining open and carefully listening.

Something that is a solution to all my problems: Many people believe that when they pray that they are placing everything in God's hands with an attitude of "Here. Fix it." However, when the desired solution does not reveal itself, such people blame God and live in anger. Prayer is not a means of instant gratification. It is not a pill for all ailments. In fact, prayer involves cooperating and working with God to make changes in our lives and in the world. It often takes a lot of patience and perseverance. Prayer does not necessarily spell out or immediately trigger solutions to the troubles in our lives. Instead, through prayer, we gain insight and direction so that we can work productively toward a solution.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

In the Bible, we note that there are about 650 different prayers listed. From these prayers we are able to gain a key understanding of what prayer is and therefore are able to define it as being:

- A lifting up our soul to God: Ps 25:1 "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul." Psalm 143:8 "Let me hear of your unfailing love to me in the morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I have come to you in prayer."
- A pouring out our heart to God: Psalm 62:8 "O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge."
- A crying out to God: Psalm 86:3 "Be merciful, O Lord, for I am calling on you constantly."
- Spiritual incense to God: Rev 5:8 "And as he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense—the prayers of God's people!"
- Coming before the throne of grace: Psalm 84:1-2 "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty. I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the Lord. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God." Hebrews 4:16 "So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it."
- Prayer is a spiritual sacrifice & the fruit of our lips: Hebrews 13:15 "With Jesus' help, let us continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God by proclaiming the glory of his name."
- Drawing close to God in friendship, fellowship and trust: James 4:8 "Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you hypocrites."

Prayer can therefore be defined as an act of worship that comes from a one-on-one relationship with Abba Father. It is an opportunity where we are able to have fellowship with Him seeking His will for our lives. Prayer is not a mysterious practice reserved only for spiritual leaders and the five-fold ministry. Prayer is simply communicating with God - listening and talking to Him.

1. PRAYER IS A CONVERSATION WITH GOD:

The most basic definition of prayer is, simply, a conversation with God. Because it is characterized as being a conversation we need to note that it is a dialogue. This means that it is a two way conversation where both parties will actively take part in talking and listening. Often prayer is only seen as a means by which a person is able to do all the talking – where requests are given to God by means of lists. However, prayer is more than just talking, prayer also entails a time of listening. Just as in a conversation, you cannot hear the other person if you are talking or if your mind is distracted. So it is with God. If you want to hear Him speak, you must be quiet and you must be focused on what He is saying. King David said, "Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul" (Psalm 143:8). David waited on God for a "word" for that day. He not only prayed and spoke to God, but he was willing to "wait" for God to speak to him and give him direction. Psalm 46:10 "'Be silent, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world."

HOW WILL WE KNOW IT IS GOD SPEAKING?

John 10:27 "My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

The Bible gives us seven basic ways in which God can speak to us:

Scripture: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Holy Spirit speaking to our heart: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'know the Lord,' for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them" (Hebrews 8:10-11).

The Prophetic (word of knowledge, word of wisdom, personal prophecy): "Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:19-21).

Godly counsel: "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14).

Confirmation: "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed" (Matthew 18:16).

The peace of God: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful" (Colossians 3:15).

Circumstances/Timing: "After these things he (Paul) left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were tent-makers" (Acts 18:1-3 -- this relationship between Paul, Aquila and Priscilla -- which happened as a result of circumstances -- became one of the most important strategic partnerships in the book of Acts).

2. PRAYER IS THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD:

While God is Omnipresent, and His presence is always with us, we are able to encounter His Presence when we come to Him in times of worship and prayer. Experiencing the Presence of God is having a realization of God's presence – of perceiving His presence and being conscious of Him. There are times when His presence with us is in greater measure, and we experience God in a greater capacity. The manifest Presence of God is what brings power and changes lives. When we place ourselves before Him in worship, we make room for Him and increase our awareness of the Presence of the Lord in our lives. Prayer is the place where pride is abandoned, hope is lifted, and supplication is made. Prayer is the place of admitting our need, of adopting humility, and claiming dependence upon God. Prayer is the needful practice of the Christian. Prayer is the exercise of faith and hope. Prayer is the privilege of touching the heart of the Father through the Son of God, Jesus our Lord. James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus," (Phil. 4:6-7). Practicing the presence of God through worship and prayer is one of the most valuable things we can do. God has promised that as we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us and we will experience His presence in ever increasing measures.

3. PRAYER IS A RELATIONSHIP:

Each one of us is created for relationship with God, and the capacity for that relating is written into our nature. Relationship is something that needs focused attention to develop fully, and prayer is the most basic means given for the cultivation of this life-giving relationship with God.

"Relational prayer is the centre of all true prayer. The power of petitionary prayer depends on the centrality of relational prayer" ¹

THE KEY TO RELATATIONSHIP IS THE MATTER OF THE HEART

Relationship always involves a strong desire to be with. A relationship will fade if we have no continuing interest in spending time with the person whom we love.

"If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (John 15:7). In this verse we note that Jesus was providing His disciples with two keys to receiving answers to your prayers.

Firstly, "If you abide in Me": This speaks of relationship. What is it that God requires from you? In order for you to be able to come to Him in prayer God desires that you establish a very strong personal relationship with Him! The word "abide" speaks of being in a continual state or place. It speaks of always being in the presence of God. Not only when the crisis comes and you need an answer and solution to your circumstances, but it speaks of even when you are not in a place of crisis. It speaks of a continual relationship with God, abiding in His presence.

What Jesus wants from us is that we be willing to abide in Him, that we be willing to live in Him. When God created man, He created Him with the purpose of intimate fellowship. Notice that Jesus starts the first sentence out with the word "IF." IF you have established a personal relationship with God, THEN you can approach Him with your prayer requests, and THEN He will answer them.

¹ Papa Prayer – Dr Larry Crabb, Integrity Publishers page 32

Secondly, "My words abide in you": This is the second secret in powerful and effectual prayer. His "words" literally mean His Words. If you have established a good, loving, personal relationship with God, then He will talk to you just like you will talk to Him. And if He is talking to you, then His words will be abiding in you! This will be as a direct result of the free flowing dialogue that you will have with God as a result of having had established a close personal relationship with Him.

The Bible is the only true source that we have down here on this earth where we can really learn all about God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. When you first enter into a true personal love relationship with someone, the first natural desire you will have is that you will want to get to know everything you can about this person. You will want to know about all of their likes, their dislikes, where they have come from and what they have been through. And the only way that you can find out about them is by asking questions. Relational prayer is about you and God. "The chief purpose of relational prayer is to get to know God" 2. It is being focused on the Provider and not the provision. Being focused on the Person who is well able to give us all that we need rather than on the things that we receive from the Person.

THE IMAGE OF GOD:

Relating to God in a relational manner rather than a motivation of "gimme me" depends on the image that we have of God. Do we have the right image of God when we pray? Do we see Him as being a preoccupied King, an unkind Master and an unloving Father? Do we see God as He really is or have we distorted His image by looking at Him with the perception of our own earthly father? When we pray to our Abba Father, we need to ensure that the image that we have of God is right. God is a Loving Father. When we consider the characteristics of a natural father who is considered as being "good", we note that he would be a father who provides, comforts, protects, disciplines, and loves us beyond what we can imagine. In the Bible we note that God, our Heavenly Father has proven that He is a:

- **Father to the fatherless:** He fills the role of the father in the lives of those who *don't have a one!* Psalm 68:5, "A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation."
- **Provider:** He provides even the most basic of our needs. Matthew 6:26, "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

2 Papa Prayer by Larry Crabb

- **Comforter and Protector:** In times of trouble, we can run to Him for comfort. Psalm 32:7, "You are my hiding place; you shall preserve me from trouble; you shall surround me with songs of deliverance." Psalm 34:17, "The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit." Psalm 94:18-19, "If I say, 'My foot slips,' your mercy, O LORD, will hold me up. In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul."
- **Disciplinary:** Just as an earthly father is there to instruct and correct so is our heavenly Father. Psalm 94:12, "Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, and teach out of Your law." Proverbs 3:11-12, "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights."
- **Father who loves us:** Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Matthew 7:11, "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!"

ASSIGNMENT

What image do you have of God the Father? What ten words would you use to describe Him?

Ask three people to give you five words that they would use to describe, Father God. Do not give them time to think but get their first reaction. Did you find that their image of God was positive or negative?

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?

Before we get into types and techniques of prayer, we first need to address a fundamental question – why do we pray? If God is Omnipresent and Omniscience is there really a need for us to pray? Surely He knows everything anyway and therefore does not need to be told about our personal requests and needs?

Yes, God is an omniscient God, not only knowing what's in our hearts and minds—what we're going to say— but also knowing what's going to happen. However through scripture we note that prayer was given a place of importance by the great patriarchs of the Old Testament and by Jesus and the Apostles of the Early Church in the New Testament. Why was prayer important? Why was and is there a need to pray?

1. PRAYER IS POWERFUL:

We pray because prayer is powerful! The power of prayer should not be underestimated. James 5:16-18 declares, "...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."

Jesus taught, "...I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 tells us, "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Prayer in the Bible is answered by God in miraculous ways. Throughout the Bible, we find many instances of God's people praying and God answering their prayers. Through this list, you will see that God worked significantly through the prayers of His people:

- Abraham: God agreed to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if He could find 10 righteous people in those cities (Genesis 18:22-32). Unfortunately, this was not the case and these cities were destroyed. However, God still answered Abraham's prayer by sending His angels to remove righteous Lot and his

family before the judgment fell. Even though the evil cities were destroyed, the righteous in those cities were spared.

- Moses: God miraculously answered many of Moses' prayers including the parting the Red Sea (Exodus 14:13-22) and giving the Israelites good water in the wilderness (Exodus 15:25). Perhaps the most miraculous answer that God gave to Moses was when Moses prayed that God would spare Israel after the incident with the golden calf (Exodus 32:7-14).
- Elijah: God miraculously answered Elijah's prayer on Mt. Carmel when he rained fire from heaven in the showdown between God and the false god Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40 especially 37-38).
- Daniel: Daniel's whole career was spent in prayer to God. His prayers were miraculously answered. Daniel prayed to be shown the king's undisclosed dream and God answered him (Daniel 2:17-18). Daniel was thrown to the lions because he continually prayed to God and God spared him (Daniel 6:4-24). Daniel prayed for Israel and for forgiveness of their sins when the 70 years of captivity were nearing an end. God answered Daniel's prayer by sending Gabriel to tell him exactly when the Messiah would come (Daniel 9).
- The church prayed for Peter: The early church in Jerusalem prayed for Peter after his arrest by Herod and God miraculously answered their prayer by sending an angel to free Peter from prison (Acts 12:5-10).

The power of prayer is not the result of the person praying. Rather, the power resides in the God who is being prayed to. 1 John 5:14-15 tells us, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him." "Call unto me and I will answer" (Jer 33:3).

2. JESUS WAS AN EXAMPLE OF PRAYER:

Paul said, "And you should follow my example, just as I follow Christ's." (1 Cor 11:1). Why do we pray? Because we desire to imitate Christ. The action word, "imitation" has the following meaning:

- To use or follow as a model
- To copy the actions, appearance, mannerisms, or speech of; mimic
- To copy or use the style of
- To copy exactly; reproduce

- To appear like; resemble
- Reproduce someone's behavior or looks
- To behave in a similar way to someone or something else, or to copy the speech or behaviour, etc. of someone or something

The Greek word "*mimetes*" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) taken from the root word "*mimeomai*" means to "follow or **mimic**". Who is "me" in this verse? It is the apostle Paul. We should imitate Paul as he imitates Christ. Paul was an imitator of Christ. He followed Christ; he copied Christ; he tried to reproduce Christ in his life; he behaved, appeared and spoke the words of Christ. And in doing this, Paul could boldly tell us that we should imitate him because he was a true reproduction of Christ. Therefore we are to imitate Christ in all that He did on earth. What should we imitate? We should imitate Jesus in prayer.

Jesus prayed! Even though He was the Son of God, Jesus prayed while He was on earth. This shows us the importance of prayer. If Jesus, Sinless man needed to pray how much more does sinful man need it?

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM JESUS' PRAYER LIFE?

Jesus needed time alone with the Father. Jesus needed and desired time alone with His Father. This is evident in His pattern of withdrawal. He left the crowds to go pray. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mk. 1:35). His effort to arise in the dark and seek a solitary place indicates a deliberate and perhaps even urgent need to escape the crowds and be alone to pray.

Later, when Jesus healed a man of a serious case of leprosy, the news spread quickly. Consequently, "crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses" (Lk. 5:15). We would expect Jesus to rejoice at the many opportunities to heal. Instead, He "often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Lk. 5:16).

Before Jesus called the apostles, He spent the night in prayer on a mountainside (Lk. 6:12–16). The Greek word that translates "the night" is a medical term. It was used to describe the all-night vigil of a doctor as he waited at the bedside of a patient. Jesus did not go for a hike up the mountain and then decide it would be a good time to pray. The vigil quality of His prayer reflected a need for God's guidance. Whether it was to seek the Father's guidance on a particular decision or to be refreshed for the demands of ministry, Jesus needed—and deliberately sought out—time alone with God to pray.

Jesus needed to hear from God. When He was baptized, He heard from God: The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, empowering Him for His ministry, and God spoke words of reassurance: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Lk. 3:22). Jesus needed to hear from God again later, after a hard week of trying to get through to His disciples who He really was and what lay ahead (Mt. 16:13–28, Lk. 9:18–27). The disciples were shocked and voiced denial at what Jesus said. At this low point, Jesus withdrew to a mountain to pray, taking Peter, James, and John with Him (Lk. 9:28). There, Jesus was transfigured before the three disciples, and God spoke His affirmation of Jesus' role: "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him" (Lk. 9:35).

Jesus needed God's strength in temptation: In the wilderness after His baptism, Jesus sought God's direction through fasting. At this time of heightened emotion and sensitivity, Satan stepped in. He tried to get Jesus to worship him, to adopt a ministry of sensationalism, and win people by meeting their material needs. But Satan forgot that Jesus, fasting and alone with God in the desert, was also in a heightened state of communion with God. Jesus was able to decisively repel each temptation, and angels ministered to Him after the exhausting experience.

After Jesus fed the crowd of more than 5,000, the people were ready to make Him king by force (Jn. 6:15). This must have been a temptation for Jesus, for here was an opportunity to help and "save" needy people apart from suffering on the cross. How did Jesus keep from getting off course? He sent the disciples and the crowds away, and went up into the mountain to pray (see also Mt. 14:22–23).

Jesus needed to overcome His own will. Satan's temptations weren't the only problem, however. Jesus had to contend with His own will. Thoroughly human, Jesus resisted death as any mentally healthy person would. Thoroughly God, He desired perfect obedience to God's will. As His death grew nearer, the tension was very much on His mind: "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" (Jn. 12:27–28). "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me" (Mt. 26:39). "Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Mt. 26:39). Wrestling in prayer with His own will through the night, Jesus finally submitted to God's will. When the surrender was over, Jesus left the garden with renewed courage and strength. To His disciples, He said, "Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" (Mt. 26:46).

Jesus needed to pray for what lay ahead. Even after the garden, however, Jesus still needed to pray in order to endure what was ahead. He was arrested, unfairly tried, ridiculed, taunted, flogged, and nailed to a cross. His response? A prayer: "Father, forgive them . . ." (Lk. 23:34). Afflicted by intense physical pain

and the crushing weight of humanity's sins, Jesus must have experienced an awful loneliness. In the supernatural darkness that descended, He felt utterly abandoned and called out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk. 15:34). God answered by enabling Jesus to finish His task and die with an utterance of triumph: "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30). His final words were a prayer of trust: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Lk. 23:46).

WHAT TYPE OF PRAYER MINISTRY DID HE HAVE?

Personal prayer ministry: This was time that He had alone with the Father as mentioned in Mark 1:35 Mark 6:46. His reason for spending time with the Father was to discover God's will for His life.

Public prayer ministry: In His public ministry He prayed. For example: He publicly thanked God for food (Mark 8:6, 7, John 6:11, 23; Mark 14:22). He prayed publicly for the benefit of the people, that they would believe God (John 11:41-43). He prayed for the people to be healed and raised from the dead (John 11:41). He prayed for unbelievers (Luke 23:34).

Ministry team prayer: Jesus prayed for His disciples (those who were to ministry with Him and for Him in the coming days). See Luke 22:32, John 17 and John 14:16

3. PRAYER IS INSTRUCTED

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians told us to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions and with all kinds of prayers" (Ephesians 6:8). Jesus Himself told us to "always pray and not to give up" (Luke 18:1). Prayer is a form of serving God (Luke 2:36-38). We pray because God commands us to pray (Philippians 4:6-7).

4. PRAYER IS A TOOL IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Prayer is a tool for Christians to use in their fight in spiritual warfare. Luke writes that we are to pray so that we will not fall into temptation (Luke 22:40). As our relationship with God is strengthened, spiritual attacks from the devil intensify. We are told to go into spiritual warfare by putting on "the full armour of God" (Ephesians 6:11), so that we will be ready to fight the devil. Prayer is a major weapon in fighting the spiritual battle. Ephesians 6:10-20 reminds us that ultimately our struggles are not against humans, but against powerful spiritual beings and forces. The picture here is that of a war. Life as a Christian is not a playground; it's a battlefield. We are instructed by Paul, an experienced soldier in this combat, to be appropriately prepared for our struggle. Modeling a

Roman warrior, we put on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, loins girded with truth, feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel, shield of faith, sword of the Spirit (the Word of God). Notice what he says: "With all prayer and petition pray . . . with all perseverance and prayer . . . and pray" In two verses, we are commanded to pray five different times.

5. PRAYER IS AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH

We are called to pray and to believe that we will receive what we ask for (Mark 11:24). James writes that when we pray, we should not doubt. "For if we do so, we should not expect to receive anything from God" (James, 1:6-8). Prayer is the key that unlocks faith in our lives. Prayer and faith are complimentary. As Christians, we need to put our faith into action and one way to do that is through prayer. A lack of prayer demonstrates a lack of faith and a lack of trust in God's Word.

We pray to demonstrate our faith in God, that He will do as He has promised in His Word, and will bless our lives abundantly more than we could ask or hope for (Ephesians 3:20). Prayer is our primary means of seeing God work in others' lives. Because it is our means of "plugging into" God's power, it is our means of defeating a foe and his army (Satan and his army) that we are powerless to overcome by ourselves.

6. PRAYER HELPS US OVERCOME TEMPTATION

Prayer is an important instrument in our overcoming sin and temptation. Perhaps no experience in the earthly life of Christ is more instructive on prayer than in Luke 22:39-41. Luke sets the scene. It is the night before Jesus' death. Jesus and His apostles have left the upper room and have navigated the winding path they knew well, up the Mount of Olives to Gethsemane. Jesus knows that great temptations are soon before them - His capture, His trials, His scourging, His mockery, the lure of their denial, His Crucifixion. Mindful of their need for fortitude, He addresses them: "He says, "pray [in order] that you may not enter into temptation." What did He mean? Simply that their antidote to yielding to the temptations that fear, discouragement, and horror would soon present, was prayer. Prayer would fortify their trembling faith and courage. How could He know this? Because He, too, faced His own darkness.

Jesus modeled exactly what He had told His disciples: He prayed so that He could defeat temptation. We are told by Luke that His prayers were so heartfelt, His struggles so intense, that His sweat was bloody. He began His prayers with, "Father if there is any way that this cup can pass from Me..." At the end of that

hour, He rose from prayer, having settled with His Father, "not My will but Thine be done." Prayer had been the means of His victory. He returned to His men to find them . . . asleep! When He confronted their tiredness He again said (verse 46), "pray that you may not enter into temptation." Notice that He commanded this in the beginning of this passage, then He demonstrated it in the body of this passage, and He reiterated it at the end of this passage. When you face temptation, PRAY! That is what will see you through. But instead, usually we pray only after we have yielded. What about seeing prayer as our first option so that God can give us courage and strength prior to our temptations? If we would pray more, we would yield less!

7. PRAYER IS CRUCIAL IN DETERMINING GOD'S WILL

We pray because prayer is crucial in determining God's will. How does prayer help determine His will? Jesus again gives us a demonstration in Luke's gospel. Read Luke 6:12-16. Here, He prays all night about choosing from the hundreds who followed Him, a special group of disciples whom we now know as the Apostles. How did prayer help? The chief purpose of prayer is to get our wills unbiased! Thus, we pray to God about His will in some area, knowing that we probably are already leaning in a certain direction. We implore Him first to help our wills to move back to the center -that is, willing to do whatever is His will. Once we arrive there He shows us through our minds why one alternative is better than another and therefore is His will for us. Jesus talked to the Father all night about His choice for the disciples. Maybe Jesus had preferences for His followers. He probably had a list - at least a mental one. Perhaps Peter was already on it, but perhaps Andrew was not. Thomas certainly wouldn't have been on mine, and neither would Simon the Zealot. Maybe they weren't at the top of Jesus', either. Yet, through the work of His Father and His own yielded nature in intercession, the reasons came clear to Him why all three of these men plus nine others should be tapped. Our searching out of God's will can be the same. We pray so that our wills (not our emotions) can be yielded to the Divine "whatever." Then 2 Timothy 1:7 becomes alive: "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and sound judgment." As we spend time with God in prayer, He will guide us to ideas, thoughts, reasons, Scripture, which will reveal His will to us. It might be over days, weeks or sometimes months...but to know God's will requires talking to Him about it.

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

Knowing how to pray, of course, means understanding what Biblical prayer is. Given this, we must understand a few major underlying principles that apply to how we pray.

1. KNOW WHO YOU ARE PRAYING TO!

Because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work in perfect unity and harmony, each has a specific role in our prayers. The writer of the book of Hebrews said, "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence (boldness), so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16). But how do we approach the Almighty God? Do we pray directly to Him? Do we pray to Jesus Christ and ask Him to present our needs to the Father? How can we even approach such a holy God with boldness?

WE PRAY TO THE FATHER!

Jesus taught that we are to pray to the Father.

- Matthew 6:6 "But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you.
- Matthew 6:9 "Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored".
- John 16:23 "At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. The truth is, you can go directly to the Father and ask him, and he will grant your request because you use my name."

"*Our Father in heaven*" In these few words, we note whom we are to pray to.

First, He is our Father. Jesus constantly referred to God as the Father. He calls God the Father 195 times. This word, "Father" or "Abba", is an intimate phrase which means, "Our Daddy". By saying "our Father", Jesus was emphasizing the close intimate relationship with God that only those who follow Jesus can claim.

Secondly we note that Jesus added, "in heaven", words which emphasize not the closeness of God, but rather His distance. He does not belong to this earth which is limited and corrupt. He belongs to another place and He Himself is wholly other. He is transcendent—beyond our experience, even beyond our

categories and our understanding. We are speaking to a God who is the omnipotent King of the Universe whom we fear, and at the same time is the loving Daddy who we know in an intimate, personal relationship. That is the wonder of prayer, that anytime at all we can have a personal conversation with God who is both far away and near at the same time

The nature of Father God:

When we pray we need to keep in mind the nature of our God. He is infinite in all His attributes and for all eternity we will be exploring what He is really like. Following is a listing of some of the attributes of God. Perhaps we should thank and praise God for each of these and for being the God that He is.

- The Bounties of God: Isa 64:4 "For from of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear, neither has the eye seen a God besides Thee, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him."
- The Faithfulness of God: Deut 7:9 "Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;"
- The Foreknowledge of God: Rom 8:29 "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; "
- The Grace of God: Rom 5:21 "...even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"
- The Goodness of God: Ps 25:8 "Good and upright is the Lord..."
- The Holiness of God: Rev 15:4 "Who, will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For all the nations will come and worship before..."
- The Immutability of God: Mal 3:6 "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."
- The Justice of God: Ps 89:14 "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne..."
- The Knowledge of God: Ps 147:5 "His understanding is infinite"

- The Love of God: Rom 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- The Loving-Kindness of God: Ps 36:7 "How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings."
- The Mercy of God: Ps 119:156 "Great are Thy mercies, O Lord..."
- The Omnipresence of God: Ps 139: "Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence?"
- The Power of God: Ps 62:11 "...power belongs to God"
- The Solitariness of God: Ex 15:11 "Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?"
- The Sovereignty of God: Is 46:10 "For I am God, and there is none other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'"
- The Wisdom of God: Rom 11:33 "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! "
- The Wrath of God: Rom 1:18 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..."

WE PRAY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

We are able to come to the Father because of the access that we have through Christ. He has given us the ability to boldly approach the throne of Almighty God. We therefore do not need a human mediator but can come through our Heavenly Mediator, Jesus Christ.

- John 14:6 "Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."
- 1 Tim. 2:5 "For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus."

- Hebrews 4:14-16 "That is why we have a great High Priest who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God. Let us cling to him and never stop trusting him. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it".
- 1 John 3:21-23 "Dear friends, if our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence. And we will receive whatever we request because we obey him and do the things that please him. And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us."

Jesus' death opened the way for all His people. For generations the veil in the temple symbolized the un-approachableness of a Holy God, but when Jesus died "the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent." (Mt 27:51). The life, death and life again of our Savior Jesus is sufficient to dispel every hindrance to our coming to the Father. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom 5:1,2) We are persuaded that we have access to God and experience His unmerited benefits with great joy in the Glory of God now and yet to come.

WE PRAY IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

"The name represents the person; to ask in the Name is to ask in full union of interest and life and love with Himself, as one who lives in and for Him....when the Name of Jesus has become the power that rules my life, its power in prayer with God will be seen too...It is not to the lips but to the life God looks to see what the Name is to us....'in my Name' has its own safeguard. It is a spiritual power which no one can use further than he obtains the capacity for, by his living and acting in that Name...O come, and let us learn to pray in the Name of Jesus...O awake, and use the name of Jesus to open the treasures of heaven for this perishing world " 3 God honors those who truly pray in His Son's name.

- John 15:16 "You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name."

3 With Christ in the School of Prayer, Andrew Murray, p 191-2.

- John 16:23 "At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. The truth is, you can go directly to the Father and ask him, and he will grant your request because you use my name."
- John 14:12-14 ""The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father. Yes, ask anything in my name, and I will do it!"

The name of Jesus means everything to God. He lifted Jesus to the highest place in the Heavenly sphere and elevated His name far above all others in Heaven and on Earth. From the following passages, we are able to see the significance and standing given to the Name of Jesus:

- Acts 3:6 "But Peter said, 'I don't have any money for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!'"
- Acts 3:16 ""The name of Jesus has healed this man—and you know how lame he was before. Faith in Jesus' name has caused this healing before your very eyes.
- Acts 4:10 "Let me clearly state to you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed in the name and power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth, the man you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead. "
- Acts 4:30 "Send your healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus."
- Acts 19:17 "The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored."
- Philip. 2:5-11 "Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross. Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on

earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

To pray in the name we must be abiding in a living relationship. When Jesus was on earth His command was "Follow me..." now while He is temporarily in Heaven the command is "Abide in me..." Abiding in Christ is a spiritual relationship that we have with Jesus, also the Father and the Spirit. It is based in the fact that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit so as to be holy in His sight and alive with a love for God. Just as the branch of a vine or tree cannot bear fruit by itself so we cannot be fruitful unless we abide; that is stay in communion with our vine Jesus. Not to abide has serious consequences (John 15:6), but to abide makes us fruitful and we have the promise, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). We cannot ask in Jesus' name if we are not abiding in Jesus. So the condition of asking in Jesus' name, and getting whatsoever we ask, is abiding in Him. Prayer is going into the secret place of the Most High and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1).

To pray in the name we must be abiding in obedience. The context of John 14-16 seems abundantly clear that asking "in Jesus' name" is a command for the child of God who is in obedience and fellowship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is what abiding in Christ is, living in obedience and communing with our God. When we live like this, our hearts are close to God's and we can't bear the thought of doing anything displeasing to Him. Our wills are surrendered to Him and we cannot want anything but His will, and when we pray we can ask whatever we want and He will do it.

WE PRAY IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

We pray by means of the Spirit's power within. Jesus promised us an Advocate, or Helper (Greek is *paracletos*) John 14:16-17 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you."

It is by the help of the Holy Spirit that we are able to pray. "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." (Romans 8:26). "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'" (Gal 4:6)

How does the Spirit help us when we are praying?

- **Teaching and instructing:** The Holy Spirit helps us to know what we should pray for (Romans 8:26), enlightening the mind to understand our needs, and of others that we should pray for. The Spirit brings to our remembrance these things, suggesting them to us according to the Word, together with the promises of God, on which prayer is grounded, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26). The Spirit helps us to know what is important.
- **The Holy Spirit intercedes with us** (Romans 8:26). In verse 26 the Greek word, "huperentugchano", means that the Holy Spirit goes WITH us to the Father to help us plead for our needs and, yes, for our wants. There are several aspects: (1) I don't know what I need. (2) The Holy Spirit DOES know what I need. (3) I go to Him, that is, the Holy Spirit, to find my needs. (4) He tells me what my needs are. (5) I make a list of the things He reminds me. (6) I then go to the Father. (7) He goes with me.
- **The Holy Spirit intercedes for us concerning things for which we do not ask.** See Romans 8:27. The second word "intercession" comes from the Greek word "entugchano" which means that the Holy Spirit entreats and confers with the Father on our behalf. Therefore the first intercession means that He helps us to know what we should pray for. The second intercession deals with going before the Father on our behalf with us. The word "intercession" here does not imply the Holy Spirit meeting with us to plead. This is the Holy Spirit coming before God for us on our behalf. Here He tells God about the needs for which we forgot to ask. He tells the Father our needs even when we forget them. There are some things that I need that I do not know that I need. There are some things I forget when I come to the Father. The Holy Spirit knows my needs. Some of these may not be things that I myself would choose, but He knows what they are, and so He intercedes before the Father to give me the things that I need. This is where Romans 8:28 comes in. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose."
- **He introduces us to the Presence of the Father.** Eph 2:14-18, "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in the flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and

preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father."

- **He overcomes our reluctance, working in us the desire to pray.** Zech 12:9-10 "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."
- **He imparts a sense of sonship and acceptance** that creates freedom and confidence in the presence of God. "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God." (Gal 4:6). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God:" (Rom 8:14-16)
- **He lays special burdens of prayer on the believer who is walking in fellowship with Him.** "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes." (Dan 9:1-3)

Here are six ways that the Holy Spirit helps our praying to be more powerful and effective:

- When I am weak, the Spirit supplies my inner man with spiritual vitality: "strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16).
- When I am struggling with my identity, the Holy Spirit confirms to me the reality of my adoption by the Father: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16).
- When I feel far from God, the Holy Spirit ushers me into the Father's presence: "we have access to the Father by one Spirit" (Ephesians 2:18)."

- When I am confused about how best to pray, the Holy Spirit gives insight: "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God" (I Corinthians 2:10).
- When I am battling unbelief and negativity, the Holy Spirit fills my life with praise: "filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns" (Ephesians 5:18-19). The apostle Paul wrote that we are to keep alert in our praying with thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2).
- When I am tempted to disobey and thus hinder my prayer life, the Holy Spirit helps me to walk in God's ways (Ezekiel 36:27) and manifest--the fruit of the Spirit-- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (Galatians 5:22). It is by the Spirit that we put to death the deeds of our flesh (Romans 8:13).

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT CONCERNING PRAYER?

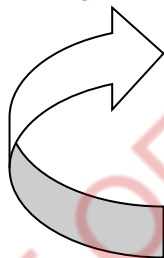
The Holy Spirit helps us pray, and Jesus helps us pray, but what's the difference?

Jesus helps us in Heaven. Jesus helps our situation. Before, we were not able to pray but Jesus changed the situation around so that we could have access to the Father. When Jesus helps our prayers, He doesn't have to say anything. He shows the Father His scars, the nail marks in His hands and feet, He shows the Father His righteousness, given for us. Jesus died for every sin, even the sins of tomorrow, and when we pray and ask for forgiveness, the Father will answer and forgive us, because Jesus died.

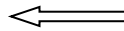
The Holy Spirit helps us on earth, because the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts. The Holy Spirit makes our prayers effective so God can accept them. They are quality prayers. The Holy Spirit helps our prayers to be according to the Will of God.

Therefore the Trinity is involved with our prayers:

FATHER GOD HEARS
OUR PRAYERS



THE HOLY SPIRIT
PRAYERS WITH /FOR US



JESUS PRESENTS
US TO THE FATHER



2. PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PRAYING WITH UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Corinthians 14:15 says, "So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind."
- Ephesians 6:18 says, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."
- Jude 20 says, "But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit."

We are able to pray in two different languages. Firstly, we can pray in the language of the Spirit and secondly we are able to pray in the language of our understanding (our home language). The apostle makes a clear distinction between praying with our spirit, and praying with our minds: therefore when he said, "I will pray with my spirit," he also adds, but I will **also** pray with my mind." It is necessary then that the mind should be involved in prayer, as well as the heart and mouth.

It is important that we use our minds during times of prayer. That which is done with the mind, is done more effectually, sensibly, and heartily, than that which is done without it; which made the apostle pray:

- For the Colossians, that God would fill them "with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Colossians 1:9).
- And for the Ephesians, that God would give them "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that [they] may know him better" (Ephesians 1:17).
- And also for the Philippians, that God would make their love abound "more and more in knowledge and depth of insight" (Philippians 1:9).

It is important that we pray with other tongues: Praying in the Spirit is a wonderful experience that comes from having a relationship with God's Holy Spirit. John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

3. PHYSICAL POSITION IN PRAYER

What physical posture should we have in prayer? When Jesus, in his ministry, taught His disciples about prayer, He emphasized attitudes, not postures. The attitude of prayer and the posture of prayer must be consistent. If the posture says humility but the attitude says pride, the prayer fails to honor God. The posture and the attitude of prayer should be:

- To declare humble vulnerability before God.
- To declare total dependence on God.
- To reflect respect and honor.

In the Bible is there specific reference to the posture of our bodies in prayer that will aid in getting our prayers answered? No! Your physical position in prayer does not ensure that you receive what you ask for.

What postures of prayer are evidenced in the Bible?

Kneeling: There are many examples of people praying to the Lord on their knees, suggesting that this was a common practice.

- Daniel prayed on his knees three times a day (Dan. 6:10),
- Stephen fell on his knees and prayed before he died as a martyr (Acts 7:60), and
- Peter knelt down before the corpse of Tabitha to pray for her before she came back to life (Acts 9:40; see also Acts 20:36; Eph. 3:14).

Kneeling was a ritual expression of the willing surrender of the life of the worshipper to God. When Jesus prayed in Gethsamane, Luke 22:41 said he knelt down; Matthew 26:39 said he fell upon his face; and Mark 14:35 said he fell on the ground. From those three statements, we can conclude that Jesus fell to the ground on His knees and, with his face toward the ground, lowered his head to the earth.

Standing: Standing before the Lord in prayer was also a common practice, perhaps more common than kneeling. One of the most impressive cases is found in 2 Chronicles 20. When Judah was confronting the possibility of military attack, Jehoshaphat invited the people to pray. He stood up in the assembly in the house of the Lord and prayed for liberation while the people were "standing before the Lord" (2 Chron. 20:13). See also the cases of Hannah (1 Sam. 1:26) and Job (Job 30:20). The Jews used to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to display their piety. Jesus condemned the pride but not the

practice of praying while standing (Matt. 6:5). In fact, He endorsed it when He said to the disciples, "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). Standing in prayer emphasizes the freedom we have to approach God (Esther 5:2).

Sitting down: The practice of praying while sitting down is rare in the Bible, but not totally absent. A good example is King David, who "went in and sat before the Lord, and he said . . ." (2 Sam. 7:18, NASB). This is the posture assumed by an individual seeking instructions from the Lord or through His prophet (e.g., 2 Kings 4:38; Eze. 8:1; 33:31), and who is ready to serve Him.

Lying down on a bed: We also find in the Bible cases in which people prayed during the night on their beds. While on their beds they remembered the Lord and meditated on Him (Ps. 4:4; 63:6). This posture places the emphasis on prayer as an opportunity to meditate on the goodness of the Lord while seeking His help. When David's first child by Bathsheba was struggling between life and death, David lay before God as he pled for the child's life. 2 Samuel 12:16 "David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground."

Prostration: When prostrating, people placed their full body horizontally on the ground with their faces on it, usually with outstretched arms. One of the knees remained bent in order to facilitate rising up from the ground. Prostration is rarely associated in the Bible with prayer (e.g., 1 Kings 1:47; Mark 14:35), but it is fundamentally an expression of homage and submission before a superior (2 Sam. 14:4; 14:22; 1 Sam. 28:14). In religious contexts this is a posture of worship (. 2 Chron. 20:18). It intensified the conviction that God was the very source of human life, the one who could preserve it (e.g., Num. 16:45; Joshua 7:6; Ps. 95:6).

Lifting your face to God: Ezra 9:5, 6 "But at the evening offering I arose from my humiliation, even with my garment and my robe torn, and I fell on my knees and stretched out my hands to the Lord my God; and I said, "O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens."

4. PRAY IN AUTHORITY

Prayer provides us with an awesome authority. Through prayer we affect and influence realms in which we are involved, but from which we may be removed physically or influentially.

Our authority in prayer is based upon:

- Our access to God (*Hebrews 10:19*)
- Our acceptance in the Son (*Hebrews 4:13*) We have authority because of our identification with Jesus Christ. We are one with Him, and His authority becomes ours as we approach the throne of grace.
- Our assurance in the Spirit (*Romans 8:26*) The work of the Holy Spirit is released through prayer. The Spirit is the guarantee (the "earnest") of our salvation. It is by the Spirit that we receive the *supply* of everything we need. It is by the Spirit that we have *strength* for the work God calls us to do. The Spirit intercedes for us.
- Our position: It is the authority of our POSITION! We are in Christ, seated with Him far above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and might.

THE EXAMPLE OF ELIJAH:

The prophet Elijah is an amazing example of what can happen when believers pray with authority, when they come confidently to God asking Him to do something that glorifies Him. With the people of Israel and the prophets of Baal gathered at Mt.Carmel for a "showdown" between the Lord and Baal, Elijah confidently prayed, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again. (1 Kings 18:36-37) When Elijah had finished his prayer, the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice, as well as the wood, the stones, the dust, and all the water in the trench. When the people saw what had happened, they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!"

Elijah prayed with boldness knowing that when he prayed he was praying in the authority. He boldly prayed and then he expected God to answer his prayers because he understood who he was praying to. He knew that God was an all consuming fire and that He was greater than all the earthly idols that man had made.

BELIEVE IN THE AUTHORITY OF YOUR POSITION

The Bible says the following concerning the authority that we have in Christ:

- We are able to prevail through Christ (Exodus 17:11-20)
- We will be mighty men of valor (Judges 7:12)
- We have the authority of the Name of the Lord (1Samuel 17:47)
- We already have the victory because the battle is the Lord's (2Chron 20:15)
- Through Him we are able to push down our enemies (Psalm 44:5-8)
- No weapon formed against us shall prosper (Isaiah 54:16-17)
- We shall do exploits for God (Daniel 11:32b)
- We shall have a binding and loosing ministry (Matthew 18:18-20)
- We have power over devils (Luke 9:1-2)
- We have power to tread on the enemy (Luke 10:17-20)
- We are seated with Christ (Eph 2:1-7)
- We can do all things through Christ (Philp 4:13)
- We can overcome the evil one (1John 2:12-13)
- We are overcomers (1John 5:4, Rev 12:10-11)
- We can ask of Him and He will give us the nations (Psalm 2:8)
- We have power in agreement (Matt 18:19)

WHEN SHOULD YOU PRAY?

Like physical position, there is no specific time or place in which you absolutely must or must not pray. However, you should make a habit of setting specific times apart for prayer. Matthew 6:6 "But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you."

What does the Bible say concerning when we should pray?

- Genesis 28:16-18 "Then Jacob woke up and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it.' He was afraid and said, 'What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the house of God—the gateway to heaven!' The next morning he got up very early. He took the stone he had used as a pillow and set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it."
- Job 1:5 "When these celebrations ended—and sometimes they lasted several days—Job would purify his children. He would get up early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said to himself, 'Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their hearts.' This was Job's regular practice."
- Mark 1:35 "The next morning Jesus awoke long before daybreak and went out alone into the wilderness to pray."
- Psalm 5:3 "Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly."
- Luke 2:37 "She was now eighty-four years old. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer."
- Psalm 55:17 "Morning, noon, and night I plead aloud in my distress, and the Lord hears my voice."
- Daniel 6:10 "But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God."
- Psalm 119:62 "At midnight I rise to thank you for your just laws."

- Luke 6:12 "One day soon afterward Jesus went to a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night."

We note from scripture that:

We are told to "pray continually" "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). The Greek word "without ceasing" means continuous action. Therefore, "praying without ceasing" means to pray continuously. How does one pray continually? This passage does not command us to be on our knees all day, but it speaks of a heart attitude. Praying constantly means that we are always in an attitude of thankfulness, always ready to pray whatever the Spirit lays upon our heart. Praying continually involves abiding in the Father's presence, whether formal prayers are uttered or not.

We are told to pray when we are sick. James 5:13 "Are any among you suffering? They should keep on praying about it. And those who have reason to be thankful should continually sing praises to the Lord."

We should pray when we are in need. Philip. 4:6-7 "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Philip. 4:19 "And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus." Exodus 15:24-25 "Then the people turned against Moses. "What are we going to drink?" they demanded. So Moses cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a branch. Moses took the branch and threw it into the water. This made the water good to drink. It was there at Marah that the Lord laid before them the following conditions to test their faithfulness to him:"

We should pray when we need help and salvation: 2 Kings 19:19-20 "Now, O Lord our God, rescue us from his power; then all the kingdoms of the earth will know that you alone, O Lord, are God." Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer about King Sennacherib of Assyria."

DO YOU HAVE SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE

DOES GOD HEAR AND ANSWER PRAYER?

The success or failure of receiving what we have prayed for has often been attributed to the fact that God maybe does not hear the prayers that we prayer. This assumption however is erroneous as the Bible is very specific in that it says:

God hears our prayers:

- Psalm 34:17 "The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.
- Psalm 91:15 "He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.
- 1 John 5:14 "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

God desires to answer our prayers:

- Jer 1:12 "I am ready to perform My Word."
- Jn 16:24 "Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."
- Mt 21:22 ".whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."
- Jer 33:3 "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things..."
- Jn 14:14 "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it."
- Jn 16:23 "whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."
- Job 22:27 "You will make your prayer to Him, He will hear you..."
- 1Jn 5:14 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."
- 1Jn 5:15 "And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

- Isa 65:24 “.It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are speaking I will hear.”
- Ps 91:15 “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.”

If God then hears our prayers, why is it that many of our prayers are ineffective? What are the reasons why some of our prayers are answered whilst others remain “in thin air”? What are the hindrances to our prayers and how can we ensure that we can change our ineffective prayers to successful prayers?

How Would You Rate Your Prayer Life?

Answer each of the following questions, and give yourself a score of 4 for "always", 3 for "often", 2 for "sometimes", 1 for "seldom", and 0 for "never".

- _____ 1. Do you set aside time for prayer in private every day?
- _____ 2. Are you able to keep your thoughts from wandering to other matters when you pray?
- _____ 3. Do you make yourself get up promptly in the morning in order not to neglect prayer?
- _____ 4. In public prayer are you able to forget the people present and make real contact with God?
- _____ 5. Do you always approach the Father through Jesus' name? Ephesians 3:12
- _____ 6. Do you diligently watch for and record answers to your prayers?
- _____ 7. After receiving an answer to prayer, do you fulfill any promises you made to God?
- _____ 8. When you pray in public do you resist the temptation to orate?
- _____ 9. Do you share with others when you receive definite answers to prayer?
- _____ 10. Do you have a prayer list?
- _____ 11. Do you wake up in the morning with a definite prayer in your heart and on your lips?
- _____ 12. When others are praying, are you courteous and reverent, praying silently with them?
- _____ 13. Are you willing to be the instrument by which God answers your prayers?
- _____ 14. Do you keep your promises to missionaries and others who ask your prayer help?
- _____ 15. In sickness or trouble of any nature is prayer your first thought?
- _____ 16. In saying grace at the table do you avoid mechanical statements and really thank Him?
- _____ 17. Do you remember to pray regularly, as God commanded, for our government?
- _____ 18. When you instruct others in praying do you teach them to talk to God?
- _____ 19. Are you free to incorporate Scriptural expressions in your prayer?
- _____ 20. Do you refuse to use your public prayer to instruct or attack others?
- _____ 21. Are you so in earnest about your requests that you come to God again and again with them?
- _____ 22. Is your most fervent prayer all the time prayer for the salvation of the lost and the welfare of fellow Christians?
- _____ 23. Do you really fight the interruptions that would keep you from praying?
- _____ 24. Do you utilize prayer as a means of resisting temptation?
- _____ 25. When you pray, do you honestly seek the glory of God?
- _____ Total points

If you score 100, you have a rather outstanding prayer life. If not more than 50, put yourself at the top of your prayer list.

HINDRANCES TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER:

When answering prayer, God responds first to our attitude, much as a parent responds to a precious child (Psalm 103:13-14). Our childish actions and attitudes frequently affect a prayer's desired results. Unforgiveness (Mark 11:24-25), selfishness (Proverbs 21:13), doubt (Matthew 21:21-22), greed (James 4:2-3), pride (2 Chronicles 7:14-15), and stubbornness (Zechariah 7:11-13) hinder the answers to our prayers. Your prayer life can either be successful whereby you are able to see the hand of God move on your behalf in answering your prayers, or it can result in ineffective and unanswered prayers. The result of your prayer life being a success or a failure is completely dependent upon you!

- Whether you have set aside all the hindrances that stand in your way concerning praying and your prayer life
- Whether you have a prayer life which is based on relationship and not that of a spoilt child, and
- Whether you have the right heart attitude when you are praying.

There are many things that stand in the way of us pursuing a prayer life like that which was demonstrated in the life of Jesus and the many great apostles found in the Bible. Let us look at some of the wrong attitudes and actions that we may take during our prayer time which will lead to our prayers being unanswered:

DISOBEDIENCE:

"Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him." (John 9:31)

"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." (1 John 3:22)

We cannot expect God to answer prayer if we are not doing His will. This involves more than just keeping the written commandments of the Lord. It involves doing what God wants us to do on a daily basis. Answers to prayer come when we seek to keep His commandments and please the Lord with our life. This is not to suggest that we "earn" answered prayers, any more than we can earn salvation which comes only by faith (Eph. 2:8-9). He answers our prayers from his "grace" and "mercy" (Heb. 4:16), not merely from our good deeds. However, keeping His commandments and pleasing the Lord is a product of our obedience to His word, which is faith in action (James 2:20).

What are His commandments?

We are to have an intimate relationship with God: He commanded that we are "to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, and soul, and to love our neighbor as ourself" (Mark 12:30-31). This means that we are to place God as our priority in our lives and that only He should be worshipped. As long as we have idols in our lives God will not hear us (Ezek 14:1-3). What exactly is an idol? It is anything man worships that is not God (Gal 5:20).

We are to love others: "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Lack of love, bitterness, unforgiveness is the root of many unanswered prayers, since faith works by love (Gal 5:6). Why is love important? It is by our actions of love that people are able to know that we are His disciples (1 John 2:10, 3:1-23, 4:12)

SECRET SIN:

"If I cherished sin in my heart, the Lord wouldn't have listened." Psalm 66:18.

"When you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; Yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourself clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil. Learn to do well. Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." "Come now, and let us reason together," says Yahweh: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:15-18.

"Behold, Yahweh's hand is not shortened, that it can't save; neither his ear heavy, that it can't hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." Isaiah 59:1,2. "He who conceals his sins doesn't prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." Proverbs 28:13.

When we cherish sin in our hearts, our prayers remain unanswered. To cherish sin in your heart means there is a sin which you love so much that you will not give it up. If you conceal your sins your prayers are not answered, but if you confess your sins in repentance you will find mercy and your prayers will be answered. Confession of sin means you agree with God that what you have done or are doing is wrong by His standards. Failure to confess your sins and make things right with God and man is a major cause of unanswered prayer.

DOUBT AND LACK OF FAITH:

Matthew 21:21 "Then Jesus told them, 'I assure you, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, 'May God lift you up and throw you into the sea,' and it will happen.'"

Mark 11:22 "Then Jesus said to the disciples, 'Have faith in God.

James 1:5-7 " If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking. But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to answer, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. People like that should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

What is doubt?

- Doubt is a form of unrighteousness, just as faith is a form of righteousness.
- Doubt is an action of the mind that disbelieves God; it is the silent mistrust of God's Word.
- Doubt is a major obstacle to spiritual progress.

During Jesus' ministry they brought to him a child which had an evil spirit. Jesus asked the boy's father, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believe." (Mark 9:23). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). We must come to the Lord with unwavering faith in Him. We cannot please God without faith. Prayer is not merely "begging" from God, it is believing God and His Word! Faith is believing that you will receive what you are praying for. It is praying with confidence that God has heard our prayers and the answer is on the way.

How can we increase our faith? Faith will come forth and grow as we devote our attention to the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Our faith can also be "built up," by praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 1:20).

NOT ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD

1 John 5:14-15 "And we can be confident that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will. And if we know he is listening when we make our requests, we can be sure that he will give us what we ask for.

Since God wants only the best for us, He will not and does not answer those prayers that will do us any harm or that will be detrimental to our spiritual growth.

WE DO NOT ASK OR WE ASK AMISS:

"I tell you, keep asking, and it will be given you. Keep seeking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened (Luke 11:9,10).

"You don't have, because you don't ask." (James 4:2).

When we are asking God to do something in our lives we must ensure that we are asking specifically. When we go to the shops we do not go and ask for "food", we ask for specific items in the shop. If we want to receive what we desire in our hearts we must ensure that our asking is specific according to the will of God.

WRONG MOTIVES

"You ask, and don't receive, because you ask amiss, so that you may spend it for your pleasures." James 4:3.

"When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most assuredly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner chamber, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." Matthew 6:5, 6

At times our requests are not answered because the wrong motives are behind our asking. God does not hear when we ask to satisfy our own selfish pleasures or our own interests. The motive behind your asking should be to bring glory to God and to express your love to Him (1 Cor 4:7).

"Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1Corinthians.10:31.

UNFORGIVING SPIRIT:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you,

that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:43-48).

"Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:12, 14, 15).

"Don't judge, and you won't be judged. Don't condemn, and you won't be condemned. Set free, and you will be set free. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be given to you. For with the same measure you measure it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:37, 38).

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32.)

An unforgiving and judgmental attitude is a major cause of unanswered prayer.

STINGINESS IN GIVING:

"Honor Yahweh with your substance, with the first fruits of all your increase: So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." Proverbs 3:9,10.

"Whoever stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he will also cry out, but shall not be heard." (Proverbs 21:13).

One of God's principles is that you do not receive until first you have given. The measure you use in giving to others is the measure God uses in giving to you. If you sow nothing, you reap nothing, and if you sow much you will reap a bountiful harvest.

VAIN REPETITION:

"In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. Therefore don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him." Matthew 6:7, 8

Repeating the "Lord's Prayer" in a worship service or reading a printed prayer is not praying. Prayer is communication with God in our words for specific requests, with thankfulness for specific blessings, and praising God for specific things He has done. Too often we pray the same general prayer, repeating them daily, weekly, monthly, or as often as we pray. This is not prayer.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS:

"You husbands, in like manner, live with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor to the woman, as to the weaker vessel, as being also joint heirs of the grace of life; that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7.

God has revealed to us, in the Bible, what He expects of the family unit and the relationships between its members. In God's sight the family unit is holy and He hates anything that destroys that unit. Therefore, Satan will attempt to destroy all strong family ties. When we fail to abide by God's rules in family relationships our prayers are hindered.

CONDITIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PRAYER LIFE

To be an effective person of prayer, you must have relationship with the One to whom you pray. Above all else, prayer is an opportunity to enjoy intimacy with God. Jesus warns us that we can do His works and not be known of God. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

Before we can begin to discuss the things that we can do during our times of prayer to help our prayer be effective, we first need to ensure that we have relationship.

How Can I Develop an Intimate Relationship with God?

Spend Time with the Lord, daily. In any earthly relationship, the way to develop relationship with someone is to spend time with them. Intimate relationships are born by learning to trust. Being open and vulnerable and being willing to show all that is in your heart to the person. To be an intimate friend of God, you need to be able to pour out your heart to Him, sharing the most intimate details of your life, your hopes, your dreams and your very heart with Him. If our prayer life consists only of petition and intercession, it can lead to anger and frustration. If prayer is not answered in the speed that we wish it to be answered, we can become bitter and resentful toward God. However, if we grow to know God, a delayed prayer will only be an opportunity to pray again. Spending much time with the Lord is one of the only methods to truly know His ways, and not just His acts. Knowing God leads to resting in the assurance of His ultimate goodness, despite the circumstances we see around us.

Hab. 3:17-18 "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior."

To be in intimate relationship with God is to make Him number one in our lives, above all others, and above all else. Matt 10:37 ""Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;"

What are the keys to having a successful prayer life?

1. PRAYER THE WORD OF GOD:

The Bible is God's "Instruction Manual" for humanity. It tells us who God is, what He is like and how we ought to serve Him. In its pages we find God's own instructions as to how we ought to pray to Him. God commands us in His Word to, 'earnestly study to show yourself approved to God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth' (2 Timothy 2:15) To know God, to understand His will and to believe in His promises, you need to regularly study His inspired Word. Paul wrote: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Bible is our prayer book. We should not only read the Word but also pray it. The Spirit uses the word to teach us how to pray, since we do not know how to pray as we should (Rom 8:26). When we pray the Word of God we are praying His will into the situation that we are praying for and we are sending forth His Word that will bring results. Isaiah 55:10-11 "The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it."

Why is God's Word vital to prayer?

- Because in it, God Himself is speaking. (Hebrews 1:1-2). The Bible is more than a collection of fancy sayings for a few religious fanatics. Scripture contains the very words of God. In a sense God, Himself, becomes a part of our prayer when we use His Word while praying. To bring God's Word into prayer is to bring God into prayer.
- Because the Bible is alive. When God is in something, it will be alive because God is alive. (Hebrews 4:12). In the Word we find life, so to add the Word to our prayer adds life to our prayer.
- Because it reveals God's nature and power (John 15:7 & Hebrews 1:3). In God's Word, we discover the nature and power of God. There is absolutely no limit to the ability of God as unveiled in His Word.

- Because it builds faith. God's Word is the parent to all faith. (Romans 10:8-10, 17).
- Because it says much about prayer (1 John 5:14-15). The entire Bible declares God's willingness to answer man's prayers. In a sense, it is the greatest Book ever written on this subject.
- Because it prepares the prayer warrior for service. To be truly effective prayers, we must spend more time in preparing our hearts for prayer, which is best done through time spent in God's Word prior to prayer.

2. FORGIVE OTHERS:

Another vital key to answered prayer is our willingness to forgive others. God does not hear those who come to Him in a spirit of revenge, bitterness or hatred. Immediately after giving us the "Lord's Prayer"—the *outline* prayer describing the right general approach to talking with God—Jesus went on to instruct His followers: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to warn us NOT to come into God's presence while *oppressing* others, *accusing* others or being wrapped up in serving only the *self*. He wrote: "If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness" (Isaiah 58:9-10). Jesus gives us the same admonition: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar; and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). We need to come to God in a repentant and *forgiving* attitude. Otherwise, as Jesus said, *God will not forgive us!* A spirit of humility and mercy is a key element in whether or not God will hear us as we pray. His inspired Word tells us: "But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isaiah 66:2)

3. BE HUMBLE:

2 Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Isaiah 57:15 "The high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, the Holy One, says this: 'I live in that high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I refresh the humble and give new courage to those with repentant hearts.'"

Humility in prayer is essential. When we become truly humble we realize that we are limited creatures who are absolutely dependent on God for life, breath, and all things. Christ is our example. He humbled Himself when He became a genuine man and lived in constant dependence on His Father and He took the sinner's place on the cross. He did nothing on His own initiative apart from His Father (John 5:19, 30; 8:28-29; 12:48-50). Prayer was the way He lived and got things of eternal value done. On at least one occasion He spent all night in prayer (Lk. 6:12). Fifteen times in the gospels we find Jesus in prayer. He arose long before daylight and went out to a solitary place to pray (Mk. 1:35). He won the biggest battle of His life in Gethsemane in prayer (Lk. 22:40-45).

Humility leads to prayer as a constant necessity because the humble know that apart from Christ we can do nothing of eternal value (John 15:5).

4. PRAY GOD'S WILL!

Jesus prayed: "not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). Remember this key phrase from the outline prayer in Matthew 6: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (v. 10).

Another key to successful prayer is to be absolutely sure that—as far as possible—you align your will and your requests with God's will. As you zealously study the Bible and yield to let Christ live within you, His will increasingly replaces your own so that your prayers become effective. George Mueller (1805-1898) of Bristol, England was one of the mightiest men of prayer in his time. But, George Mueller never prayed for anything just because he wanted it, or even if he felt that it was needed for God's work. Here's what one author writes about Mueller's prayer life: "When it was laid upon George Mueller's heart to pray for anything, he would search the Scriptures to find if there was some promise that covered the case. Sometimes he would search the Scriptures for days before he presented his petition to God. And then when he found the promise, with his

open Bible before him and his finger upon that promise, he would plead that promise with an open Bible before him." 4

The Word of God clearly reveals to us what the will of God is for our lives. For example, provision, healing, prosperity, good relationships etc. However we can learn more of what God's will concerning our prayers when we look at prayers in the Bible:

PRAYERS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

The Old Testament has been written for our example and therefore those things that were prayed for in the Old Testament reveal to us what God's will is for our lives. The great patriarchs and heroes of faith of the Old Testament prayed for the following things:

- Salvation of a city (Genesis 18)
- The curse of barrenness to be removed (Gen 25:21, 1 Sam 1)
- Deliverance (Exodus 2:23-25, 1Kin.17:20-23, 2Chr.33:12-13)
- Provision (Ex 15:22-25, Ex 17, Judges 15: 18-19)
- Healing (Num 12:1-4, 2Kin.20:1-6)
- For a successor (Num 27)
- Guidance (2 Sam 2:1)
- Wisdom (1Kin.3:6-15)
- For resurrection life (1Kin.17:20-23)
- Prosperity (1Chr.4:10)
- Victory (1Chr.4:10, 2Cro.13:13-15)
- Protection (2Chr.20:12-13,27)
- Repentance of sins Ez.9:5-15, Neh.9:5-38)
- Guidance (Ps 25)

PRAYERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT:

By looking at the prayers of both Jesus and Paul we are able to know what we should pray for:

1. THE LORD'S PRAYER:

The Lord's prayer teaches us what we should pray for according to God's will. Matthew 6:9-13 "Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven. Give us our food for today, and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Your Kingdom Come: We are to pray that the kingdom of God comes to the earth. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) to bring the gospel to the world can be found in this phrase, 'Your kingdom come.' Here is the true heart of all mission and outreach. 1 Chron. 29:11 "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things." Romans 14:17 "For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Your Will Be Done: John 4:34 "Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work." Daniel 3:16-17 "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty." Luke 22:39-42 "Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. There he told them, "Pray that you will not be overcome by temptation." He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will, not mine." We should pray that God's will is done in our lives and that we have the ability and the strength to be obedient to His will even if it is against our "feelings". This might mean that we do not receive the answers that we selfishly desire but it means that we have placed ourselves in the hands of God and are willing for Him to control our lives. It is being in a place of complete dependency of God and independent of ourselves.

For example:

- Pray for the salvation of peoples (2 Peter 3:9, Psalm 2:8 – 9): God does not want people to perish. It is God's will that people everywhere come to knowledge of Jesus Christ. You need to pray for individuals, groups of people and even nations where Jesus is not known. When is the last time you prayed for someone to get saved? This should not just be a once off prayer but something that you do continuously until the person (or people) get saved. It should also be a specific prayer.
- Prayer for leaders and those in authority (1 Timothy 2: 1-4)
- Pray for labourers in God's vineyard (Matthew 9: 37-58)
- Pray that the church as a whole will rediscover the power of prayer (Luke 19: 45 – 46)

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread: When Jesus used the word "bread", He was referring to everything we need for our earthly existence. Our prayers should show our understanding and belief that God is our Provider, and that He cares about even our smallest daily needs. We need to be conscious of how utterly dependent we are on our Father to provide for our daily physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs.

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions'" (Exodus 16:4).

1 Kings 17 tells us the story of how God provided the Prophet Elijah with food during the time of drought. Matthew records how Jesus fed bread and fish to huge crowds on two different occasions (Matt. 6:25,33).

Forgive Us Our Debts as We Forgive Our Debtors: We are to pray that we will always have:

- A repentant heart: Psalm 51:3-5 "For I recognize my shameful deeds— they haunt me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.

- A forgiving spirit. An attitude of heart that is willing and quick to forgive all those who have hurt us. This speaks about forgiveness among our associates, neighbors, friends, family and loved ones. Any and all persons in our lives that we come in contact with in social or business situations are included as well. If we can't forgive others, how can we expect our heavenly Father to forgive us?

Lead Us Not Into Temptation: 1 Cor. 10:12 "If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin." Pray, so you won't fall. Although temptation is always an opportunity to grow in spiritual strength and maturity, it is also a snare that would cause us to stumble. James 1: 13-14 says, "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed." James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

We need to ask our heavenly Father to help us recognize every evil thing, every temptation before us. We need help to stay focused on our Father and see the evil that we might fall into, for what it is really is, a trap. A temptation is an enticement to do wrong through a promise of pleasure, ease or advantage. Jesus told Peter, James and John in the garden: "Pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Luke 22:40). "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). The disciples wanted to do what was right, yet later that night they left Jesus. "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12).

"Deliver Us From Evil:

- Deliver us from evildoers: Psalm 140:1-4 "O Lord, rescue me from evil people. Preserve me from those who are violent, those who plot evil in their hearts and stir up trouble all day long. Their tongues sting like a snake; the poison of a viper drips from their lips. O Lord, keep me out of the hands of the wicked. Preserve me from those who are violent, for they are plotting against me."
- Deliver us from evil that we do. We are to pray that we will be delivered from all evil thoughts and wrong thinking. We are to pray that we will be delivered from all evil actions and evil habits. In Romans 7:19 Paul confesses, "The good that I would do I do not do, and the evil that I would not do I do." Galatians 5:17 explains that both the Holy Spirit and the flesh are in constant active unceasing conflict. "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit

against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." The word "deliver" (*ruomai*) means "to rescue, save, deliver, or preserve someone from someone or something." When the believer is walking in dependence upon the Spirit he is delivered from the lust of the flesh. Whatever is undertaken in the energy of the flesh will fail, because it is not in the power of God. The only way we can possibly be delivered over our old nature is by the Spirit working in us (Rom. 6:14; 8:2). The most spiritual Christians are warned to pray daily, "and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil." If we do not we are courting failure in living the Christian life. It is our responsibility to walk in the Spirit, reckon on the indwelling power of Christ living in us, putting off the old man, mortifying the flesh and abiding in Christ. The deliverance from the power of sin is through Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:25).

An acronym for prayer can be:

Praise God (Our Father who are in Heaven, holy is Your Name)
Remember God is in control and He is Faithful (Your Kingdom come)
Ask for God's guidance
Yield to His will (Your will be done)
Expect God to take care of you (Give us this day our daily bread)
Repent: turn from sin and turn to God (Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil)

2. JESUS PERSONAL PRAYER:

When Jesus prayed in His public and personal life we notice that He prayed for:

- Forgiveness of those who had hurt Him: Just as in the Lord's prayer, "forgive our debtors" so Jesus prayed for those who were crucifying Him. Luke 23:34 "Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people, because they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice".
- Complete Surrender to the Father: Luke 23:46 "Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" And with those words he breathed his last."

When Jesus prayed this He was following the same principles in the Lord's prayer of "Your will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven". Mark 14:36 "And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

- Those who were saved:
 1. Jesus prayed that the Father would care for His disciples. John 17:6-15 "I have told these men about you. They were in the world, but then you gave them to me. Actually, they were always yours, and you gave them to me; and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, for I have passed on to them the words you gave me; and they accepted them and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me. "My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. And all of them, since they are mine, belong to you; and you have given them back to me, so they are my glory! Now I am departing the world; I am leaving them behind and coming to you. Holy Father, keep them and care for them—all those you have given me—so that they will be united just as we are. During my time here, I have kept them safe. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold. "And now I am coming to you. I have told them many things while I was with them so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one."
 2. Jesus prayed that they would be pure and holy, knowing the truth of the Word of God: John 17:16-19 "They are not part of this world any more than I am. Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth. As you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself entirely to you so they also might be entirely yours."
 3. Jesus prayed for the unity and the witness of all believers: John 17:20 - 23 "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me because of their testimony. My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father—that just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us, and the world will believe you sent me. "I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are— I in them and you in me, all being perfected into one. Then the world will know that you sent me and will understand that you love them as much as you love me."

- God to be glorified in His life: John 12:27-28 "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. [28] Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

3. NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS:

Paul, the Great Apostle and writer of most of the New Testament also reveals to us what it is that we should pray for:

- Ministry opportunities: Col. 4:3 "Don't forget to pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to preach about his secret plan—that Christ is also for you Gentiles. That is why I am here in chains."
- Evangelism and spreading of the Gospel of Christ: Ephes. 6:19 "And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words as I boldly explain God's secret plan that the Good News is for the Gentiles, too." 2 Thes. 3:1 "Finally, dear brothers and sisters, I ask you to pray for us. Pray first that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored wherever it goes, just as when it came to you."
- "Deliverance from evil" 2 Thes. 3:2 "Pray, too, that we will be saved from wicked and evil people, for not everyone believes in the Lord." Romans 15:31 "Pray that I will be rescued from those in Judea who refuse to obey God."
- Unity of the Church so that God will receive glory: "Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit". (Romans 15:5-6, 13)
- Wisdom, understanding and knowledge of God: "...making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe... (Ephesians 1:16-19)

- Spiritual growth and maturity: "...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)
- Developing fruit: "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God". (Philippians 1:9-11) "...we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints of light". (Colossians 1:9-12)
- Being worthy of the call of God – having the right walk before Him so that we can bring glory to God: "To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order 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 1:11-12)
- Ability to do the will of God: "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

5. HAVE FAITH IN GOD

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt 21:22)

Jesus has promised that whatsoever we shall ask, if we believe, it shall be granted us. God always responds according to our faith- "be it done unto you according to your faith" There are many passages and stories in the bible showing God's reaction to faith and to unbelief. Let us examine a few of them.

- Paralyzed man: Matt 9:2""And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."
- The woman with the issue of blood: Mark 5:24-34 "Jesus went with him, and the crowd thronged behind. And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. ... She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched the fringe of his robe. For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his clothing, I will be healed." Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel that she had been healed! Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples said to him, "All this crowd is pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?' " But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. ...And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You have been healed."
- The prostitute: Luke 7:48-50 Luke 7:48-50 "Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." The men at the table said among themselves, "Who does this man think he is, going around forgiving sins?" And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Why is faith important in prayer? It is important because God does not answer according to our prayer. He answers according to our faith.

- "Be it done according to your faith",
- "Your faith has made you whole",
- "Your faith has saved you".

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report... But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb 11:1-2,6)

Faith involves laying hold of things that are invisible. The summary of ministry or work for God is believing and trusting in Him. "Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29). If we are to serve God acceptably, if our prayers are to reach the throne of God, we need to believe. We need to have faith. We need to trust in God.

How can we build our faith?

- It is an act of the will it is not just a feeling. I can decide to trust or not to trust in someone.
- It can be nurtured by meditating and obeying God's word. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).
- It can be encouraged by the testimonies of others.
- The knowledge of God increases faith. The more we know God, the more we trust and believe in Him. We can say with Job "Though he slay me I will trust in Him" (Job 13:15)

6. BE PERSISTENT

Ephes. 6:10-18 "A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms. Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared. In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere."

In this portion of scripture we notice that Paul highlights several keys to effective prayer life:

- Effective prayer follows putting on the armor of God.
- Effective prayer includes all types of prayer.
- Effective prayer is offered in every season, at all times.
- Effective prayer is prayer in the Spirit. Jesus states, "God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)
- Effective prayer is the result of being watchful and alert.
- Effective prayer is perseverant.

Paul says, "be on the alert with all perseverance." There are at least two words translated "perseverance" in the New Testament, and these two words have quite different connotations.

- The first and most common word means to hold up under pressure. There is a heavy weight bearing down on you, and you must hold up under it. This is the word used, for example, in Hebrews 12:1: "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us".
- The other word used means to serve constantly. It is used, for example, in Acts 10, where Luke tells us that the Roman centurion Cornelius had soldiers who "persevered" with him -- they waited on him constantly, were devoted to him, were anticipating his needs and trying to meet those needs even before he asked. This word is very frequently used in conjunction with prayer in the New Testament. In Romans 12:12 both words for perseverance are used: **"rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer"**. We are to hold up under the pressures of tribulation, but we are to be devoted to, to persevere in prayer.

What are some of the attributes of perseverance? Perseverance is:

- Focused. It is concentrated on the object of prayer.
- Incessant. It continually repeats and is not rebuffed by opposition or failure.
- Unyielding. It never gives up.
- Patient. It waits for the answer.

- Tenacious. It holds fast. To hold on when all around are letting go is most essential for final victory. Perseverance in prayer usually pays off; but even when it doesn't, we must never give up our faith in God. Hold fast!

The Bible is full of stories of men and women who persevered in prayer and saw God respond.

- Jacob: Gen 32:24-28 "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed". (Gen 32:24-28) Perseverance in prayer changed his name and his destiny. He prevailed with God and with man.
- Bartimaeus: Mark 10:46-52 "And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way" (Mark 10:46-52) Bartimaeus was a blind man but through his persistence he was healed. He did not give up when his friends and those around told him to keep quiet. Bartimaeus could not be hushed. He could not be stopped. He cried out with a louder voice. "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me" and Jesus heard him. This is perseverance.

- The Woman of Canaan: Matt 15:22-28 "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Even though she initially was met with silence she persevered. Even when we have a reason to be offended, let us not lose sight of the object of our prayers. Persevere.
- The two friends: Luke 11:5-8 "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." (Luke 11:5-8). Ask, seek, knock – these three words speak of persistence – a continual asking until an answer to prayer is given.

7. PRAY FERVENTLY

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

The prayer that God answers is a fervent prayer. When something is fervent, it is hot and earnest. It is desperate. It is not:

- A cold routine prayer
- A rehearsed prayer
- A dignified prayer
- A Pharisaical prayers
- A superficial prayer

How is fervency manifested?

There are a few examples of fervency in the scripture.

- Hannah: 1 Sam 1:9-15 ""So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD". (1 Sam 1:9-15). Hannah's prayer was fervent. It was not an ordinary routine prayer but was a prayer that came from the very depths of her being.
- Daniel: "I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" (Dan. 9:3). Daniel saw prayer as an opportunity to express the passion and fervency of his heart to the God he loved and served. In Daniel 9:3 he says, "I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him." That implies he set apart a specific time to devote to thoughtful, earnest, and fervent prayer. That is further supported by the way he prepared himself through fasting and donning sackcloth and ashes--symbols of humility and deep contrition over sin.
- Jesus: Luke 22:44 "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke 22:44
- Paul talks about this prayer in Romans 8:26 "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

"Prayers must be red hot. It is fervent prayer that is effectual and that availeth. Coldness of spirit hinders praying; prayer cannot live in wintry atmosphere. Chilly surroundings freeze out petitioning; and dry up the springs of supplication. It takes fire to make prayers go." 5

8. HAVE A PURPOSE FOR PRAYER

Know what you are going to pray about. It is difficult to pray fervently without knowing what you want or desire from God. We should have a clear-cut, well-defined idea about what we are asking God for. Know that what we are asking for is according to His Word. This means that before we go and pray we need to search the Scriptures to see what the will of God is for the situation that we are in. We must renew our minds with the Word so that we know God's will on the matter without a doubt. God's will is to do what He promises in the Word. By meditating on the Word and letting it transform our hearts as we renew our mind in it, we prepare ourselves to pray in faith. If we don't know what the Word says, there is a good chance that doubt will enter, and if we doubt we cannot expect to receive from God (James 1:6,7). Jesus told us to ask, seek and knock. (Matthew 7:7).

- In asking, we must be definite.
- In seeking, our goal is to know God and commune with Him.
- In knocking (intercession) we must understand what the Lord wants to do and pray the Word for that thing.

Sometimes we do not know what to pray for, and so we can pray in the Spirit (Romans 8:26). We can pray in tongues without understanding according to the will of God. However, Paul stated that he prayed with the spirit and with the understanding (1Corinthians 14:15). Our whole being, including our minds, should be involved in praying.

9. **BE REPENTANT**

2 Chron. 7:14 "Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land."

From this verse we notice that there is a promise by God, an action by ourselves and a reward:

Promise: "If My people who are called by My Name ... I will ..."

Action:

- Humble themselves
- Pray
- Seek My Face
- Turn from their wicked ways

Reward:

- Hear from Heaven
- Will forgive their sins
- Will heal their land

Having a repentant heart means that you are:

- Praying for change: Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."
- Praying for restoration: Psalm 51:12-13 "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." See 2 Chronicles 7:14
- Prayer of praise: Psalm 51:15-19 "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." A prayer of praise turns your complete focus upon God. David had learned the value of

praising God. Out of the 248 times the word "praise" is used in the Bible, the book of Psalms uses it 160. Two-thirds of praise is found in Psalms. No wonder Acts 13:22 calls David "a man after (God's) own heart." He was a man quick to repent and a man who was quick to praise God. Psalm 7:17 "I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high." Psalm 28:7 "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him." Psalm 34:1 "...I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

TYPES OF PRAYER

Ephes. 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

In this verse we understand that we are to pray always with "all prayer and supplication". This means that there is more than one type of prayer that is mentioned in the Bible and that we are to pray. What are these varied prayers?

The acronym that is often used in describing the various forms of prayer is, ACTS. This stands for:

- Adoration
- Confession
- Thanksgiving
- Supplication

1. ADORATION

Jesus taught us that when we begin to pray we need to say, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your Name" The first thing that we need to do when we come to the Father in prayer is to recollect Who He is. Often times when we come to God in prayer, we rush ahead and start asking God for what we need instead of reflecting on Who we are praying to. The first part of our prayer should be adoring God. When we enter God's presence, we must recollect who God is. We must become conscious of his glory and be filled with awe, reverence, and love for our heavenly Father.

Whenever we behold something magnificent or beautiful, we adore it. Adoration is worship. True worship really is adoration. In true worship, we behold the beautiful object and declare it to be so. We declare that it is beautiful, majestic, etc. True worship is not a lie or exaggeration. It is the declaration of truth. We behold something that is beautiful, and declare that it is beautiful. We behold something magnificent and declare it magnificent. In fact, we cannot help it. When we behold something beautiful or magnificent, the natural response is to exclaim its beauty and not to keep quiet.

Why is adoration important?

Because our first call is to love God (Matt 22) rather than ask God of what we need. Jesus set Mary of Bethany as the model of discipleship. After she broke the alabaster jar and wiped Jesus' feet with her tears, Jesus declared, "Wherever the gospel is preached, what she has done also will be preached" (Mark 14:9). In other words, the extravagant expression of love for Jesus is the fitting response for the extravagant love of Christ on the cross. What God desires of us foremost is not our knowledge, service or even sacrifice. He desires love, heartfelt affection. God is a lover. The Bible declares: God is love (1 John 4:8). He created all things out of love so that He would be able to love them. And what does He desire in return? That we would love Him! Love is the end of all things.

When Jesus returns, He will be looking for a bride. And what does a bride need to have more than anything? Love for the bridegroom. The bride does not have to be smart, talented, or rich. The bridegroom seeks love. The main call of Christians is that we would love Him. We are exhorted to grow in our love for the Father and the Son of God. How do we do that? We grow in our love for God by adoring Him.

We are charged to adore God because:

- **God is beautiful and worthy to be adored.** God is the most beautiful and majestic being in the universe. He is more beautiful than the most beautiful human being, more awesome than the greatest human invention, more powerful than the greatest demonstration of power in the universe. God is worthy to be adored. Therefore, it is right to worship God. Jesus said, "[If we do not worship Him], the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:40). Why? Because Jesus is beautiful, magnificent, powerful, etc. God is worthy to be adored. Psalm 86:9-10 prophesied, "All the nations you have made will come and worship before you ...they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvelous deeds...."
- **We become like what we adore.** If we do not worship Him, we will end up worshiping things that are not worthy of our worship. We will worship materialism. We will worship superficial physical beauty. We will worship power. In doing so, we become like the object of our worship. Jeremiah lamented, "They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves" (Jer. 2:5). Most things that people worship are worthless. By worshiping them they also become worthless. People become shallow, callous and perverted. "All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as

though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another..." (2 Cor. 3:18). As we see God's glory, we gain His glory. We become like what we worship.

- **Adoration fills our hearts with joy.** Beholding an object of beauty is a pleasurable experience. The experience of pleasure is not completed however until we express our adoration. As we adore God, our hearts experience joy. "Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." Psalm 100:2.
- **Adoration leads to the knowledge of God.** Adoration turns objective truths about God into personal knowledge of God. Theoretical knowledge is powerless to get us out of the pits we fall into. Only the personal knowledge can. Adoration leads the theoretical, intellectual knowledge of God into a personal, heart knowledge.
- **Adoration leads to intimacy:** Adoration moves our hearts into such love for God. As we grow in our knowledge of God and heartfelt adoration, we grow in intimacy with God. In the prayer of adoration, therefore, we experience the intimacy with God.

HOW CAN WE ADORE GOD? FOCUS ON HIS PERSON

To hallow God's name, we must understand who God is. God's name stands for who God is as He is revealed especially in the Word. To know His Person we therefore can focus on the revelation of God in His Names (His identity).

- **God is called El, which means Mighty One.** When we come into the presence of God, we must always be aware that he is El, the Mighty One. Psalm 89:11, "The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it." Psalm 139:8, "If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there." Isaiah 6:1, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple."
- **God is called El Shaddai,** which means He is God Almighty, mighty to save his people and destroy all his enemies. No matter how hard your situation, God can deliver you. Psalm 18:2, "The Lord is my deliverer." 2 Sam. 22:2, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer."

- **God is called Elohim**, which means Creator. He is God who, with fullness of power, calls into existence that which never existed before. Psalm 24:1-2 "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him. For he laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths." Job 38:4 ""Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much." Jeremiah 51:15 "He made the earth by his power, and he preserves it by his wisdom. He has stretched out the heavens by his understanding."
- **God is called El-Elyon**, which means God Most High, Sovereign Lord of the universe, who rules all things. God rules the whole universe. He is the sovereign God. Nothing happens outside His will. Psalm 91:1 "Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Isaiah 14:14 "I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High." Daniel 4:34-35 "After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever. His rule is everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal. All the people of the earth are nothing compared to him. He has the power to do as he pleases among the angels of heaven and with those who live on earth. No one can stop him or challenge him, saying, 'What do you mean by doing these things?'"
- **God is called Adonai**, meaning Master of all, Lord of all.
- **God is called Jehovah or Yahweh**, which means the self-existing, self-sufficient Savior of His covenant people. God alone is independent, and all creatures depend on Him. Exodus 3:14 "God replied, 'I Am the One who always is. Just tell them, 'I Am has sent me to you.'" Isaiah 43:13 "From eternity to eternity I am God. No one can oppose what I do. No one can reverse my actions." John 8:58 "Jesus answered, 'The truth is, I existed before Abraham was even born!'" Rev. 1:8 ""I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. "I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come, the Almighty One."
- **God is also called Jehovah Jireh**, meaning the Lord who sees ahead and provides for all our needs—physical and spiritual—needs of the body and of the soul. Matthew 6:11 "Give us our food for today," Philip. 4:19 "And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus." 2 Cor. 9:8 "And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others."

- **God is also called Jehovah Tsidkenu**, meaning the Lord our righteousness. Jeremiah 23:1-6 I will send disaster upon the leaders of my people—the shepherds of my sheep—for they have destroyed and scattered the very ones they were expected to care for," says the Lord. This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to these shepherds: "Instead of leading my flock to safety, you have deserted them and driven them to destruction. Now I will pour out judgment on you for the evil you have done to them. But I will gather together the remnant of my flock from wherever I have driven them. I will bring them back into their own fold, and they will be fruitful and increase in number. Then I will appoint responsible shepherds to care for them, and they will never be afraid again. Not a single one of them will be lost or missing," says the Lord. "For the time is coming," says the Lord, "when I will place a righteous Branch on King David's throne. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. [6] And this is his name: 'The Lord Is Our Righteousness.' In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety." Isaiah 61:10 "I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit or a bride with her jewels."
- **God is called Jehovah Nissi**, which means the Lord my banner. He is always triumphant and leads us always in triumph. Psalm 60:12 "With God's help we will do mighty things, for he will trample down our foes." Isaiah 25:8 "He will swallow up death forever! The Sovereign Lord will wipe away all tears. He will remove forever all insults and mockery against his land and people. The Lord has spoken!" 1 Cor. 15:54-57 "When this happens—when our perishable earthly bodies have been transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die—then at last the Scriptures will come true: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. How we thank God, who gives us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord!"
- **God is also called Jehovah Rapha**, meaning the Lord who heals you. In Isaiah 53 we are told, "By his stripes we are healed." Exodus 15:22-27 "Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea, and they moved out into the Shur Desert. They traveled in this desert for three days without water. When they came to Marah, they finally found water. But the people couldn't drink it because it was bitter. (That is why the place was called Marah, which means "bitter.") Then the people turned against Moses. "What are we going to drink?" they demanded. So Moses cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a branch. Moses took the branch and threw it into the water. This made the water good to drink. It was there at Marah that the Lord

laid before them the following conditions to test their faithfulness to him: [26] "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and laws, then I will not make you suffer the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you." After leaving Marah, they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees. They camped there beside the springs." Psalm 103:3-4 "He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He ransoms me from death and surrounds me with love and tender mercies." Psalm 147:3 "He heals the brokenhearted, binding up their wounds." Matthew 9:35 "Jesus traveled through all the cities and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And wherever he went, he healed people of every sort of disease and illness."

- **God is called Jehovah Shalom**, meaning the Lord is peace. Isaiah 26:3-4 "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock." John 14:27 " "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid." Philip. 4:7 " If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."
- **God is called Jehovah Roi**, meaning the Lord is shepherd. He is our shepherd, ever guiding us in the way of life, peace, and joy, ever knowing our every need, ever helping us, and ever present with us. See Psalms 23. Isaiah 40:11 "He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young." John 10:11 "'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." 1 Peter 2:25 "Once you were wandering like lost sheep. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls."
- **God is also called Jehovah Shammah**, meaning the Lord is there. God is with His people. Remember how Jesus said, "If two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst"? God is abundantly available: God is not unavailable as many think. He is close and makes Himself available for anyone who seeks Him. He has sought us more than we seek Him. God is abundantly available for anyone who will call on Him. Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble." Isaiah 7:14 "All right then, the Lord himself will choose the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel—'God is with

us.' Matthew 28:18 "Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth."

- **God is called Beautiful:** God is beautiful and made us love beauty. Psalm 27:4, "One thing I have desired of the Lord. That will I seek. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." Song of Songs 5:16, "Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved and this is my friend."
- **God is called Glorious:** He is set apart in His glory. Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Psalm 24:7, "Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in."

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Meditate on one of the characteristics of God

- A. Think about it.
- B. Pray it—Ask God to reveal this aspect about Him to your heart.
- C. Proclaim it.

Reflect upon your life and think how God has revealed this aspect about Himself in your life.

At the end of the day, reflect on how God revealed this aspect of His nature to you through the day, through people, and events

ASSIGNMENT

Draw up a table from A – Z and find at least one name for God from each of the letters of the alphabet (more than one title can be given for each letter). Scripture references are to be given for each title of God.

For example

A – Alpha
B – Beautiful
Etc.

2. CONFESSION

DEFINITION:

"To make acknowledgment or avowal in a matter pertaining to one's self; to acknowledge, own, or admit, as a crime, a fault, a debt...To acknowledge faith in; to profess belief in.... To admit as true; to assent to; to acknowledge" (www.dictionary.net/confess)

In the Bible, the word confession refers to two things, namely

- (1) confessing your sins to God
- (2) confessing your faith in God and the truth in His Word

CONFESSING YOUR SIN

WHAT IS SIN?

Both the Hebrew and Greek words for *sin* are rooted in the archery term for having "missed the mark" or "fallen short of the target." Sin is any thought or action that is against God and God's Word.

DO WE SIN EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE BEEN SAVED AND WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS?

When we first were saved we were living in sin and therefore we needed to acknowledge Christ and ask Him for cleansing from all our sins. This was done through being saved and washed in the Blood of Jesus.

However, even though we are saved and washed in the Blood of Christ, we are not perfect. We are still attaining to become perfect – we are working towards it but the flesh and the desire of our sinful nature is still at work in our lives.

Romans 7:17-25 "But I can't help myself, because it is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things. I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still

within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin."

It is therefore for this reason that Paul instructs that we are to "put off" the old nature that desires to sin and "put on" that which is according to the Spirit of God (Colossians 3). Paul also instructs us to no longer walk by the flesh but in the Spirit of God (Galatians 5). This walking is a process and a decision that we make to be obedient to the Word of God.

WHY IS CONFESSION OF SIN NECESSARY?

Isaiah 59:1-2 "Listen! The Lord is not too weak to save you, and he is not becoming deaf. He can hear you when you call. But there is a problem—your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, he has turned away and will not listen anymore."

Sin prevents us from being in a loving relationship with God. The Bible says that sin separates us from God just as it did in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3). Any sin in our lives will keep us from the full blessings of God that we would receive in our mental, physical, spiritual and material life. Because of sin we can: become confused in the mind, sick in the body, have problems in our spiritual life and experience poverty in our finances. Psalm 32:1-5 "Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone."

In order for us to be reconciled with God we must confess our sins. Only when we acknowledge our offenses toward God can our relationship with God be restored.

WHAT IS CONFESSION?

It is acknowledging our sin through prayer to God that we have missed the "mark" we believe God set for us. In confession of sin, we tell God with our mouth our sin. This needs to be specific. This is necessary to restore communion with God and is a preparation for further fellowship. Confessional prayer is not

about telling God something God doesn't already know. Nor, as some fear, is it intended to "make us feel bad about ourselves." Rather, it helps us make honest connections with those thoughts and actions that fall short of living as God wishes us to live. The act of confession and the assurance that we are forgiven provide us a release from the burden of the sin we carry around. However, this form of prayer is only as effective as we are willing to be honest with God and with ourselves.

- "I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me" (Psalms 51)
- "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us..." (1 John 1:8-10)
- I said, "I will confess my transgressions to GOD," and you forgave the guilt of my sin." (Psalm 32:5)

HOW SHOULD WE CONFESS OUR SINS?

David after he had fallen into adultery with Bathsheba and then committed murder of her husband, (2 Samuel 11 – 12), prayed a prayer of repentance. This can be found in Psalms 51. In this psalm we are provided with an example of the steps that we are to take when we are confessing our sins to God.

Appeal to God's mercy and love (1-2): How did David plea for forgiveness? "according to Your lovingkindness" and "according to the multitude of Your tender mercies". His forgiveness was based upon God's lovingkindness and tender mercies. When we confess our sins to God we need to ensure that we are not coming to Him in the merit or worthiness of ourselves but in the goodness and the grace of God. Look at the difference in attitude between the religious leader and the sinner: Luke 18:9-14 "Then Jesus told this story to some who had great self-confidence and scorned everyone else: 'Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a dishonest tax collector. The proud Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' 'But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For the proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored."

"I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: "O Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill your promises of unfailing love to those who love you and keep your commands." (Daniel 9:4) Through Daniel's prayer there are other examples of recounting God's character. In verses 7 and 14, Daniel highlights God's righteousness—that He is just and fair and equitable in all He does. "'Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you...The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him."

When we come to God we need to have an awareness of His mercy and grace. Psalm 103:8-10 "The Lord is merciful and gracious; he is slow to get angry and full of unfailing love. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He has not punished us for all our sins, nor does he deal with us as we deserve." Grace is derived from the Greek "charis". Thayer says "...the New Testament writers used charis pre-eminently of that kindness by which God

bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving, and grants to sinners the pardon of their offences, and bids them accept of eternal salvation through Christ..." 6

Step one: Start with who God is; recall His character

- His majesty—Ps. 96:1,6; Is. 24:14
- His glory—Ps. 138:5; Ez. 3:12
- His excellency—Ps. 148:13; Ex. 15:7
- His greatness—Ps. 145:3.
- His holiness—Ex. 15:11; Is. 6:3
- His wisdom—Dan. 2:20; Ps. 104:24
- His power—Ps. 21:13
- His goodness—Ps. 107:8; 118:1.
- His mercy—Ps. 89:1; 118:1; 136:1
- His lovingkindness and truth—Is. 25:1; Ps. 63:3
- His salvation—Ps. 18:46; Is. 35:10; 61:10; Lk. 1:68-69
- His wonderful works—Ps. 26:6-7; 150:2; Is. 25:1
- His comfort—Ps. 23:4; 119:76; 86:17
- His justice—Ps. 101:1; I John 1:9
- His counsel—Ps. 16:7; Jer. 32:19
- His pardon of sins—Ps. 103:1-3
- His healing—Ps. 103:3
- His constant preservation—Ps. 71:6-8; 116:6
- His deliverance—Ps. 40:1-3; 124:6
- His protection—Ps. 28:7; 59:17
- His answers to prayer—Ps. 28:6-7; 118:21

Meditate on God's character; adore and praise Him. He is worthy of time spent doing nothing but appreciating the many facets of who He is.

6 Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, pg. 666

Acknowledge our sins to God (3-4): When David had been convicted of his sin, he did not try and hide it but was able to say, "my sin is ever before me". He understood that his sin was not only against Bathsheba, Uriah and his wife, but it was a sin against God Himself: "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight".

In order for us to receive the forgiveness for our sins, we need to be willing to confess it before God. 1 John 1:9 "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong."

This confession meant that David needed to be honest about his life, his motives and his actions. We need to take an honest look at our life so that we will have "truth in the inward parts" and "wisdom in the hidden parts". Look at the honesty in the following scriptures:

- Dan 9:5 "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments":
- Isa 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away".
- Rom 7:18 "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not."
- Rom 7:24 "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

When we confess our sins (specifically), we are helped to rightly see the connections between our actions and real consequences—Rom. 6:23. We recognize that what we really deserve is the fullness of God's wrath, so we come to appreciate tremendously and be grateful for God's grace. That's the idea behind the word "grace." It means something that is done without cause or for no reason. Daniel ends his prayer (Daniel 9) by imploring God to work. Look at all he asks, and notice the little phrases that tell the basis for his asking for these things:

- verse 16—"in keeping with your righteous acts"
- verse 17—"For your sake"
- verse 18—"but because of your great mercy"

- verse 19—"because your city and your people bear your name"

Step two: Be specific

Honestly take a look at your life and ask God to show you areas where you have not "hidden truth" in your inward part. For example:

Anger Eph.4:26	Arrogance Rom.1:30
Bad temper Mark 14:71	Bad thoughts Mark 7:21
Bitterness Eph.4:31	Boasting James 4:16
Brawling Eph.4:31	Cheating Mark 7:22
Conceit 2 Tim.3:3	Cowardice Acts 13:13
Criticism Rom.14:13	Cursing Eph.4:29
Despondency Num.21:4	Disobedience Rom.1:30
Doubt Matt.14:31	Drunkenness Gal.5:21
Egotism 2 Tim.3:2	Enmity Gal.5:19-21
Evil desires Col.3:5	Factions Gal 5:19-21
Falseness Prov.16:30	Fear Rev.21:8
Foolishness Mark 7:22	Fornication Mark 7:21; Rev.21:8
Gambling Tit.1:7	Gossip Roman.1:30
Covetousness James 4:2; Col.3:5	Greed 2 Tim.3:2
Heartlessness Rom.1:31	Hate 1 John 3:15
Ignorance Isa.5:13	Impatience Num.21:4
Jealousy 1 Cor.3:3	Judging others Rom.14:13
Laziness 2 Tim.2:15; 1 Cor.9:27	Lovelessness Rom.1:31
Lying Rev.21:8; col.3:9	Malice Eph.4:31
Murmuring Ex.16:2	Overeating Prov.23:20
Popularity (desire for) 2 Tim.4:10	Prayerlessness Mark 14:37-38
Prejudice Rom.14:13	Pride Luke 1:51
Quarrelsomeness Tit.1:7	Quick-tempered Tit.1:7
Rebellion 1 Sam.15:23	Recklessness 2 Tim.3:4
Resisting the Holy Spirit Acts 7:51	Selfishness James 3:16
Self-righteousness Phil.3:9	Self-will Luke 22:23; Tit.1:7; 1 Sam.15:23
Sinful passions Gal.5:24	Slander 1 Pet.2:1
Stealing Eph.4:28	Strife Rom.1:29
Swearing Gen.25:33	Swindling Gen.25:31-33
Unbelief Rev.1:29	Uncleanness Gal.5:19
Unfaithfulness Rom.1:31	Unforgiveness Matt.18:35
Ungratefulness 2 Tim.3:2; Luke 17:17-18	Unrighteousness Rom.1:29
Unholiness 2 Tim.3:2	Vengeance Rom.12:19
Unwholesome talk Eph.4:29	

Worldly ambition 2 Sam.15:1-4
Worldly pleasures 2 Tim.3:4

Worldliness James 4:4

Pray for renewal and restoration (7-12):

David prayed for God to forgive him:

- To purge him with hyssop (v7)
- To wash him whiter than snow (v7)
- To hide His face from his sins (v9)
- To blot out all his iniquities (v9)

But he also sought for more; he desired

- Joy and gladness (v8)
- A new heart, and renewal of a steadfast spirit (v10)
- Continuation of God's presence and Spirit – (v11)

When we confess the sins that are separating us from a closer and more intimate relationship with God, we need to not only seek forgiveness, but must desire complete renewal and total restoration! A return to "the joy of salvation" that was enjoyed when we first were saved (Acts 8:35-39) Once we have come before God in openness and confessed our sins to Him, then God will be pleased with our worship (v16-19).

Step three: Believe in total reconciliation

When you have repented before God know what has happened to your sin and no longer live under the condemnation of that sin any more. Do not let it separate you from God in any form or fashion

WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR SIN AFTER WE HAVE CONFESSED?

- They are removed completely, as far as the East from the West. "As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps.103:12).
- God casts them where He cannot see them. "You have put all my sins behind Your back" (Isa.38:17).
- God does not make us accountable for our sins. "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for" (Isa.102). "That God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation (2 Cor.5:19).
- God covers our sins to make them invisible. "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered" (Ps.32:2). "You forgave the iniquity of Your people and covered all their sins" (Ps.85:2).
- God forgives our sins. "Nathan replied: The Lord has taken away our sin. You are not going to die" (2 Sam.12:13). "He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases" (Ps.103:3).
- God hurls our sins into the depth of the sea. "...and hurls all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).
- God wipes our sins away from the face of the earth. "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you" (Isa.44:22).
- Through Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God. "We implore you on Christ's behalf; Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor.5:20). "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).
- God cleanses us from the stains of sin. "Come now, let us reason together says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool" (Isa.1:18). "To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His Blood" (Rev.1:5).
- Jesus frees us from the bondage of sin. "Jesus replied: I tell you the truth, everyone who sins, is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will

be free indeed" (John 8:34-36). "But now that you have been set us free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness and the result is eternal life" (Rom.6:22).

- God forgets our sins. "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake and remembers your sins no more" (Isa.43:25). "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Jer.31:34). "They will search for our sins, but will not find them. "In those days, at that time, declares the Lord, search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare" (Jer.50:20).

CONFESSING THE WORD OF GOD

Another aspect of confession is that of acknowledging that which is true from the Word of God in your prayers. This can also be known as Word praying. In confession of the Word, we tell God with our mouths what He has said in His Word. We express faith and confidence in God and God's Word verbally, and it releases the blessing of God to us. The Greek word for confession is "homologeo", which is a compound verb meaning literally "to say the same thing"--to agree with someone about something. Not only do we agree with God and others about our sin when we confess (1 John 1:9) but we also agree with God's Word concerning us. "His divine power HAS GIVEN to us *all* things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:3,4).

"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." (2 Corinthians 1:20) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ". (Ephesians 1:3) If we are in Christ, then *all* the promises in the Bible can be found, claimed and received by us.

Confessing His Word over our lives means that we thank God for making them a reality in our lives. Speaking the Word of God with a first person application is one way of expressing the kind of faith which pleases God. By confessing a promise in the first person we are boldly stating that we are the ones that it applies to. We definitely express faith that we are the ones who are going to receive the blessing.

Example:

In Christ, I am:

- God's child, for I am born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. (1 Peter 1:23).
- Forgiven of all my sins and washed in the blood (Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:14, Colossians 1:14, 1 John 2:12, 1 John 1:9)
- A New Creature (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- The Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)

- Delivered from the power of darkness and translated into God's kingdom. (Colossians 1:13)

Who is God to me and in me?

- The Lord is my strength. Is. 12:2
- The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? Ps. 27:1
- The Lord is my song. Is. 12:2
- The Lord is my salvation. Is. 12:2
- Christ Himself is our peace. Eph. 2:14
- God is my exceeding joy! Ps. 43:4
- God is the Lord who heals me. Ex. 15:26
- The Lord is my rock. Ps. 18:2
- The Lord is my light. Ps. 27:1
- Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4
- Jesus Christ is my Savior! Tit. 2:13
- The LORD is our righteousness. Jer. 23:6

Some daily confessions of God's Words:

- I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, called of God, and proclaim the praises of Him who has called me out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Pt 2:9)
- I am blessed and overtaken with His blessings (Deut 28:2 Eph 1:3)
- I am blessed beyond measure, I am blessed in my coming in and blessed in my going out, I am the head and not the tail, above only and not beneath (Deut 28:13)

- I am blessed because Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law (Gal 3:13)
- Everything my hand touches is blessed and will prosper (Psalm 1)
- I build my life upon the firm rock and foundation of the Word of God, Jesus Christ, and so I stand in every storm (Mat 7:24-27)
- I am fruitful and multiplying in everything I do for God and His Kingdom (Gen 1:28)
- I am being filled with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of my understanding being enlightened; that I may know what is the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power (Eph 1:17-19)
- God is completing all that He started in my life, establishing it and perfecting it to its total fulfillment (Phil 1:6, 1 Cor 1:8)
- I am healed by the stripes of Jesus (1 Pt 2:24)
- I am the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Mat 5:13-14)
- I am complete in Him (Col 2:10)
- I walk in the Spirit, and so I don't fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Gal 5:16)
- I am seated in heavenly places, ruling and reigning with Christ (Col 2:12 Eph 2:6)
- I am dead to sin but alive unto God (Rom 6:2, 11, 1 Pt 2:24)
- I am a joint heir with Christ (Rom 8:17)
- I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph 1:13)
- I am crucified with Christ; it's no longer I that live but Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20)
- I walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might,

according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified me to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in the light (Colossians 1:10-14)

- I seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all things are added to me (Mat 6:33)
- God is able to deliver me from any 'fiery furnace' that the devil throws at me (Dan 3:17)
- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19)
- I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes (Rom 1:16)
- For God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7)
- I have power from God to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, drink any deadly thing and it will not harm me (Mark 16:15-20)
- I have the mind of Christ, always filled with God's thoughts (1 Cor 2:16)
- I am strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 2:1)
- I lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and I run with endurance the race that is set out before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith (Heb 12:1-2)
- I prosper in all things and I'm in health, just as my soul prospers (2 John 3)

HOW CAN WE USE SCRIPTURE IN OUR PRAYERS?

Why do we prayer scripture?

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are."

Isaiah 55:10-11 "The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it."

PRAYERS FOR OUR GOVERNMENT

1 Tim. 2:1-2 "I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. As you make your requests, plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks. Pray this way for kings and all others who are in authority, so that we can live in peace and quietness, in godliness and dignity."

When praying for the government and those people who are in leadership, we can pray for the following:

- The leadership will receive Christ (John 1:12)
- They will be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15)
- The Gospel will be preached in the country (Matt 24:14) and that the light of the Gospel of Christ can shine on all the people (2 Cor 4:4)
- The leaders will be men of integrity (Ps 25:21)
- They will lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (1 Timothy 2:2)
- They will be wise and understanding (Prov 2:10)
- Their ears will be attentive to godly counsel (Ps 1:1)
- They will do what is right in the sight of God (2 Chron 20:32)
- Their government will be upright (Prov 2:21)
- Expose all that is unjust that is done in secret and hidden in darkness (1 Cor 4:5)

- Open their eyes and turn them from their wicked ways (Acts 26:18)
- Raise up a godly standard in the nation (Is 49:22)

PRAYERS FOR REVIVAL

When praying for revival in your nation, pray the following:

- A deep conviction of sin, spiritual brokenness, a holy fear of God and genuine repentance among His people (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- For deep cleansing, genuine repentance, and spiritual power to engulf pastors and Christian leaders. Revival and spiritual awakening are extremely unlikely without a mighty move of God in pastors and Christian leaders. Renewed pastors are absolutely crucial to a move of God in our day! (Ephesians 6:14-20)
- Pray for God to bestow spiritual hunger in His people and draw them to fervent intercession (Philippians 2:13)
- Pray that God will bring loving unity in our churches and a deep harmony between our churches (John 13:35)
- Pray for God to fill His people with a passion to see people saved. (Romans 9:1-3)
- Pray for God to give His people a passion for missions and starting churches. (Matthew 28:19)
- Pray that God will pour out His Spirit like a mighty purifying flood. Ask God to purify our "motives as we pray for revival. (James 4:2)
- Pray for a mighty move of conviction and salvation upon communities of cultural influence. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
- Ask God for a modern day of Pentecost (Mark 11:22- 24; John 14:13-14.)

PRAYERS FOR OUR SPOUSE

When praying for our spouse prayer:

- Pray that the husband or the wife will act according to the principles that have been set forth in the Bible - Ephes. 5:22-25 "You wives will submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of his body, the church; he gave his life to be her Savior. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives must submit to your husbands in everything. And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her"
- Pray that they will exhibit godly character (Gal 5:22-23, Eph 4:32, Col 3)
- Pray that they will build their house with wisdom (Prov 24:3-4)
- Pray for their work, that they will be diligent (Ecc 10:18, Rom 12:11), that they will not be overcome by stress but that they will know their priorities (Prov 23:4-5, Matt 16:26) and that their work will be established (Ps 90:17)
- Pray that they will be willing to place the kingdom of God as their priority no 1. (Luke 12:31, Matt 6:33, Mark 12:30)
- Pray that their every need will be met (Phil 4:19, Ps 34:10)
- Pray that they will be sexually pure (1 Cor 6:18-20)
- Pray that they will be strong in the Lord (Eph 6:10)
- Pray that they will have the mind of Christ (Rom 8:6)
- Pray for their protection (Ps 34:7, Is 41:10, Ps 27:1)
- Pray that they will have the spirit of wisdom (Eph 1:17-18)
- Pray that they will teach their children about the Lord (Eph 6:4, Deut 6:6)
- Pray for the plans that God has for their lives (Jer 29:11, 1 Cor 2:9)
- Pray that they will press toward the high calling of God for their lives (Phil 4:14)

- Pray for their reputation (Prov 22:1, Prov 26:2, Ps 71:1)
- Pray for their health (Ex 15:26, Rom 12:1, Jer 30:17)

PRAYERS FOR OUR CHILDREN

When praying for your children:

- Pray that God will be their first love (Ps 23:1, Matt 6:33, Deut 26:16, Josh 1:8, Deut 6:5, 10:12)
- Pray that they will have a heart that knows God (Jer 24:7)
- Pray that they will desire to be in the presence of the Lord (Ps 23:6, Ps 26:8, Ps 27:4)
- Pray that they will be taught of the Lord (Is 54:13)
- Pray over the plans that God has for their lives, that God will direct their steps (Jer 29:11, Ps 37:23, Ps 119:133, Prov 16:9).
- Pray that they will live pure and holy lifestyles (Matt 5:8, Rom 12:1-2)
- Pray that they will depart from evil / shun evil (Eph 5:11, Ps 34:14, 1 Thes 5:22, Rom 12:9, 1 Cor 15:34)
- Pray that they will walk in the Spirit (Eph 5:1, Gal 5:16)
- Pray that they will demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)
- Pray that they will have the mind of Christ (Phil 4:7, Phil 2:5, 1 Cor 2:9-10, 12, 16)
- Pray that they will think on the right things (Prov 23:7, Prov 12:5, Rom 8:6, Ps 19:14, Phil 4:8)

- Pray that they will have good friends (Ps 119:63, Prov 13:20, Ex 23:2, Ps 1:1, Prov 4:14)
- Pray that your children will have success (Ps 112:2)
- Pray that they will have the spirit of wisdom (Eph 1:17-19)
- Pray that the Word of God richly dwells within them (Col 3:16)
- Pray that they will dwell in the secret place of the Most High and that they will experience all the benefits of being in His Presence (Psalm 91)

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

For each of the following list and discuss ten areas with scripture references that you would pray for:

- Starting a new business
- Your pastor and the church
- Your healing
- Your financial blessing
- Your relationships

3. THANKSGIVING

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving". (Col 4:2).

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Phil. 4:6).

"By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. (Heb. 13:15).

"I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. (Psalm 116:17).

Thankfulness should be a characteristic of a Christian. We should "always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). And "in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thes. 5:18). Thankfulness ought to be genuine and come from the heart. This is in contrast to the godless who "neither glorify Him nor give thanks to Him" (Rom. 1:21)

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING IN PRAYER:

A prayer of thanksgiving and praise have often been mistaken as being the same thing, however, there is a difference. A prayer of thanksgiving is thanking God for a SPECIFIC thing that He has done. This is thanking God for what He has done for us. We can thank Him both for blessings seen and those as yet unseen. It is a key to faith and it is natural and right that we give thanks always to the One from whom all good things come (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Whilst the prayer of praise thanks God for who God IS: powerful, mighty, wonderful, righteous, merciful, omnipotent, omniscient, self – existent (adoration). This is declaring good things about God, both about His character (who He is) and also His actions. To say "God is good" is to praise God. There are many styles of praise. Some are noisy and exuberant, others are calm. Praise is well-expressed through music, singing, words, shouting, clapping, dancing, shouting and giving to God.

THANKSGIVING BEGINS WITH AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE:

"Thanksgiving includes gratitude. In fact, thanksgiving is but the expression of an inward conscious gratitude to God for mercies received. Gratitude is an inward emotion of the soul, involuntarily arising therein, while thanksgiving is the voluntary expression of gratitude." ⁷

Gratitude is:

- what we feel in our hearts
- silent, secret, and passive
- arises from contemplating the goodness of God
- born of mediation of God's mercy and grace

Thanksgiving is:

- out in the open
- actually giving out of something to God
- giving to God in words what we feel for blessings received.

Thanksgiving is speaking that which is in your heart. Your thought and gratitude for God are spoken during times of thanksgiving prayer. It is a time when you willingly and freely acknowledge the goodness of God in your life – His protection, provision, blessings, spiritual inheritance, care, love, etc

THE PURPOSE OF THANKSGIVING PRAYER:

Thanksgiving magnifies God:

- Psalm 69:30-32 "I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. Let the oppressed see it and be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive! (Psalm 69:30-32)
- May all who seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee. May those who love thy salvation say continually, "Great is the Lord!" (Psalm 40:16)
- O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together. (Psalm 34:3)
- Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. (Psalm 48:1)

⁷ E. M. Bounds, The essentials of Prayer

David said, "I will magnify God with thanksgiving." The word "magnify" in the Bible has an idea of making something that may seem small or insignificant appear to be as great as it really is (like a telescope). When we give thanks to Him from our hearts, God is magnified. Gratitude glorifies God. When gratitude springs up in the human heart toward God, He is magnified as the wealthy source of our blessing. He is acknowledged as giver and benefactor and therefore as glorious.

Thanksgiving takes us into the Presence of God:

We can come closer into God's presence by thanksgiving, praise, and worship.

Psalms 100:2-5 "Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations."

Psalms 95:2 "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms"

THINGS THAT WE CAN THANK GOD FOR:

Here are a few examples of things that we should be thankful for:

- All God's marvelous works (Psalm 9:1, 66:3-7, 71:16-17, 72:18, 92:4-6, 105:5, 111:2-4)
- Your body (Ps 139:14-16)
- God's guidance and instruction to you (Psalm 16:7, 48:14, 71:17)
- The hope God has given you (Psalm 16:9)
- Salvation (Psalm 16:9-11, 71:23, 92:1, 96:2)
- The joy God gives you in His presence (Psalms 16:11)
- When you were in trouble, God heard your cries for help (Psalm 18:6, 22:24)
- Deliverance (Psalm 18:49, 54:7, 68:20)
- God's blessings and benefits (Ps 68:19)
- God's Faithfulness (Ps 71:22)
- Our health (Is 53:5)
- Our Provision (Philip 4:19)
- For the goodness and mercy of God (Ps 106:1, 107:1, 136:1-3)
- For the Gift of Christ (1 Cor 9:15)
- For victory over death and the grace (1 Cor 15:57)
- For wisdom and might (Daniel 2:23)

- For the conversion of others (Romans 6:17)
- For the nearness of God's presence (Ps 75:1)

PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Prioritize thanksgiving in your prayer life (Colossians 4:2) vs. letting it get crowded out by petition and complaining. Always include it, and sometimes focus on it alone. "What should I thank God for?"

- Focus on all aspects of your salvation and personalize it: adoption, sovereign care, forgiveness, inheritance, Holy Spirit, liberty etc.
- Take note of "small" blessings (nature; health; acts of kindness) and actually express thanks to God for them vs. taking them for granted, acknowledging without expressing thank

Ask God to sensitize you to internal complaint. When you realize it, promptly turn away from it and replace it with thanks in the related areas

4. SUPPLICATION OR PETITION

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Philippians 4:6

Definition:

The word supplication means:

- Entreaty; humble and earnest prayer in worship.
- Petition; earnest request. 8

AN ATTITUDE OF THE HEART

Supplication is one of several words in the Bible referring to prayer. The word is found 60 times in the Bible. It is a synonym of "prayer" and of the verses where supplication is used, 31 of these verses also have some form of the word pray or prayer. Therefore even though supplication means prayer, it means a specific type of prayer. It is a petition that is fervently and earnestly prayed to God concerning ourselves or others.

According to the word history of supplication, it refers to a bending down and indicates a bowing or kneeling in submission. 1Kings 8:34 states, "And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven." By extension of this picture, to supplicate is to ask for humbly and earnestly. It refers most to the attitude of our prayer.

The word, supplication, is found

- Seven times in connection with crying out to God (1Kings 8:28; 2Chronicles 6:19; Psalm 28:2; 30:8; 31:22; 142:1; Hebrews 5:7). Consider especially Psalm 142:1, which states, "I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication."
- The word is also used with the idea of weeping in three passages (Jeremiah 3:21; 31:9; Hosea 12:4).

8 Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828.

Supplication, therefore, is the attitude or spirit of prayer. We bend down to God and cry out to Him for an answer. We submit to His will and to His authority. We earnestly seek His help. In this way, we make supplication to God in our prayers.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

How are we to make supplication and petition to God?

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened ... 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 7:7-11)

3 Condition	3 Results
Ask	Given
Seek	Find
Knock	Opened

There are three basic principles that are to be remembered for your personal prayer life:

ASK

Simply ask the Lord for whatever it is you need or want, and He will grant the prayer request as long as the request is in His will for your life.

- Matthew 7:7,8 ""Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."
- Matthew 21:22 ""And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."
- 1 John 5:14,15 ""Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

- Jeremiah 29:12 ""Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you."
- John 16:23,24 ""And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."
- John 14:13,14 ""And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."
- John 15:7 ""If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."
- Matthew 6:6 ""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."
- Mark 11:24 ""Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Why don't we always receive what we desire?

"Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." (James 4:2). From this scripture we note that many times we do not receive what we want from God because:

- **We do not ask for it.** You either simply forgot to ask Him for it, or you chose, for whatever your personal reasons may have been at the time, not to ask Him for it.
- **It is not God's will for our lives:** You may be wanting something for the wrong reason or the wrong motive, like the last part of this verse is implying when it says that the prayer request might be for your own selfish and worldly pleasures.

When we do one of the above, we are asking "amiss", we are asking for something "wrongly" or "mistakenly."

SEEK

Job 5:8 "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause". What does it mean to "seek" in our petition prayer? It means that when we have asked God to provide us with a need or a want and we have not yet received it, that we choose to seek God's will for the situation. A search party is only called to look for something that is hidden and cannot be found. Therefore to seek the Lord in prayer means to seek for God in the situation. The word "seek" means to search, discover, to look for and try and find out. This speaks of more than just praying and asking for something, but it speaks of "hunting" for the answers that you need. It speaks of being active in receiving the answers that you need from God. Therefore when we are praying and asking God for a particular thing, part of our pray should be to find out what the will of God (found in His Word) is for our lives. It speaks of looking in the Word of God, meditating on what has been said, going to God in prayer with the Word and then waiting for God to answer. It speaks of a time dedicated to finding the answer that we need.

God has promised us that those who diligently seek Him shall find Him.

- Jeremiah 29:11-14 "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. I will be found by you," says the Lord. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and bring you home again to your own land."
- Psalm 9:10 "Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O Lord, have never abandoned anyone who searches for you."

The rewards of those who diligently seek Him:

Lament. 3:25 "The Lord is wonderfully good to those who wait for him and seek him." Hebrews 11:6 "So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him."

- Joy (Psalms 70:4; 105:3)
- Peace and rest (2 Chronicles 14:7; 15:12-15)
- Revelation (Jeremiah 33:3)
- Understanding in the ways of God (Proverbs 28:5)
- Strength (1 Chronicles 16:11, Psalms 105:4, Isaiah 40:31; 41:1)
- Prosperity and provision (2 Chronicles 26:5, Psalms 34:9, 10, Matthew 6:33)
- Security (Psalm 27:4, 5)

KNOCK

The word "knock" means to "rap on a door." When you knock on a door, look very closely as to what happens, watch how many times you naturally and instinctively want to knock. You will naturally want to knock at least two to four times. You will not knock just once. Try knocking just one time and see how unnatural it feels. Knocking thus means that you are asking and possibly seeking more than one time for whatever it is that you are asking God for. Knocking therefore speaks of being persistent in your prayer. In the Old Testament we note that there was both a man and a woman who showed their persistence in prayer. Hannah prayed year after year for children (1 Samuel 1) and Elijah prayed earnestly for 3 ½ years that it would not rain (1 Kings 17-18, James 5:17-18).

The parable of persistence:

Luke 18:1-8 "One day Jesus told his disciples a story to illustrate their need for constant prayer and to show them that they must never give up. There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who was a godless man with great contempt for everyone. A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, appealing for justice against someone who had harmed her. The judge ignored her for a while, but eventually she wore him out. 'I fear neither God nor man,' he said to himself, 'but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!' "Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this evil judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end, so don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who plead with him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when I, the Son of Man, return, how many will I find who have faith?"

When referring to the widow who came to the judge, we note that it refers to her "*continual coming*". This phrase has the idea that she was begging this judge for help every day. When he would show up for court, there she was. When he went into the marketplace, there she was. She pleaded with him in front of his friends. She stalked him at home. Everywhere he went, there she was, constantly asking him to give her satisfaction. Her persistence was a result of the desperate situation that she was in. She knew that if he did not help her, there would be no help for her. Because of her social standing and because of her financial standing, she had no other hope but to get help from this judge. Therefore, she made a nuisance of herself before him, everyday, until she received the very thing she was after!

The response of the judge:

He was corrupt (v2): This man did not care anything about God or man. All he cared about was himself and his own life. To put it simply, he was a wicked man! To understand this judge, we need to understand something of what the judicial system was like in those days. Wiersbe describes it this way, "The courtroom was not a fine building but a tent that was moved from place to place as the judge covered his circuit. The judge, not the law, set the agenda; and he sat regally in the tent, surrounded by his assistants. Anybody could watch the proceeding from outside, but only those who were approved and accepted could have their cases tried. This usually meant bribing one of the assistants so that he could call the judges attention to the case. " 9

He was calloused (v4): Even though he had heard this widow's petition and saw she had a case, he would not do as she asked. He simply turned a deaf ear to her pleas for help. He was hard hearted and closed minded to the needs of others.

He was condescending (v4-5): In spite of his spiritual condition and in spite of the fact that he did not care for this widow in the least, in the end, he helped her! Why? The answer lies in verse 5. There are two words there that are of special interest.

- Trouble - This word comes from two words that mean, "*to reach forth to beat another or to cause another trouble.*"
- Weary - This word means "*to beat down, to blacken the eye*". It is a word used to describe the effects of being beaten severely about the head.

Evidently this means that her continually coming before him and her constant crying was hurting this man's reputation. She was giving him a "black eye" in the community!

9 Warren Weirsbe. Be Courageous Luke 14-24, page 62

The contrast of our Father, God:

He hears His people (7): We need never fear that God doesn't hear us, because His ear is ever open to the cry of His children (Isa. 65:24; Jer. 33:3; 1 John 5:14-15).

He honors their persistence - *"though He bear long with them"*. Sometimes prayer is answered immediately, at other times, the answer is delayed for some time. The key is not giving up! God isn't just making us wait, He is working out the answers we seek. Our persistence in prayer demonstrates the depth of our burden. If you can pray about an item once or twice and then give up, you weren't really burdened over it. A genuine burden will put you before God and keep you there until He answers!

He handles their petitions (v8) - He doesn't turn a deaf ear to our petitions, but He begins the process of working them out speedily. In truth, real prayer is the evidence of God's impending answer. Why? Because real prayer always begins with God. The Spirit burdens our hearts and we offer the burden back to God, Who is already busily engaged in bringing about the answer?

Romans 8:26-27 "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will."

What can we learn from this parable?

- Be committed to prayer (v1): Jesus says that we "ought always to pray". This is the idea that we find in 1 Thes. 5:17, where the Bible says, "Pray without ceasing." "Without ceasing" has the idea of "no intermission". It can refer to a nagging cough, a tickle at the back of the throat that says a cough is always about to happen. Jesus is telling us to "be ready. To be on guard, to be watchful" It is the idea of "being in the attitude and atmosphere of prayer all the time."
- Be consistent in prayer: "Not to faint" - This phrase means "to lose heart, to become slothful, to grow weary". Jesus challenges His people not to lose heart during times when the answer to prayer is delayed. Don't give up, keep praying and don't lose heart! God will move in His time! This is illustrated by the Lord's promise in Galatians 6:9!

- Be comforted by prayer (v8) - The last question in verse 8 wonders if Jesus will find faith when He returns. That is, "will He find His people persisting in prayer before the Father over the things that really matter?" The answer to that question depends upon you and me! We may be faithful and we may not. We might persist and we might not. You say, where is the comfort in this? It lies in what Jesus said! Notice that He said, "When the Son of Man cometh..." The comfort in prayer is this: God's people may not always do what they are supposed to do, but they can count on the Lord to keep every promise He had ever made. He will be faithful to honor His Word to us. You may feel like giving up, but you keep on praying and He will answer in His time! That is His promise, (John 15:7; John 16:23; Matt. 21:22; Matt. 7:7-8).

WHO DO WE MAKE SUPPLICATION/ PETITION FOR?

SUPPLICATION FOR OURSELVES:

We pray the prayer of supplication for ourselves concerning both natural and spiritual needs. Why? Scripture encourages us to seek the spiritual and material blessings of God. Jesus said: "Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete." (John 16:24). We should approach God as a child approaches a father who delights to give us good things (Matthew 7:7-11). It is important to put our requests into words and not just assume that because God knows everything we don't have to ask. To ask is humbling; it reveals our dependence on God. If we do not come to Him with our needs, the implication is that we don't need Him!

Practical aspects of praying prayers of supplication for yourself:

- Before spending time asking God, be sure you have spent time in confession and repentance so that you come before Him cleansed.
- Talk the matter over with God before you "ask". Consider it from every angle. Ask Him what He thinks. This is a good way to check motives... and sometimes we may decide beforehand not to ask God after all.
- Be specific, avoid vague prayers (bless me etc.). The more specific we are, the easier it is to praise God when He answers our requests. If a request is vague, it may mean we don't feel strongly enough about it. A short time later we may even have forgotten what we have asked for.
- Keep requests simple, direct, balanced and **honest**.

- Pray in line with your faith. Ask for things you can imagine happening.
- Use your prayer time to immerse your decision making needs in God's love and to search out His ways.

SUPPLICATION FOR OTHERS:

We also pray the prayer of supplication for believers and all God's people.

- We are to prayer for our enemies: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:43-45)
- We prayer for those who are in ministry: "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should" (Colossians 4:2-4). In John 16:6-24, Christ prayed for His disciples—that God would protect them from the evil one as they went out into the world to spread the Word— and for those who would hear their message and come to believe that God had sent His son to save the world. Christ prayed for others and so should we.
- We prayer for all men, especially those who are in authority: "I urge, then first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ... I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing" (1 Timothy 2:1-4, 8)
- We prayer for Christians: "Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends his greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured" (Colossians 4:12). "I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also 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 the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe" (Ephesians 1:16-19) "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his

Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 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, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through out all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" (*Ephesians* 3:14-21)

INTERCESSION AND PRAYER

1 Tim. 2:1-2 "I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. As you make your requests, plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks. Pray this way for kings and all others who are in authority, so that we can live in peace and quietness, in godliness and dignity"

WHAT IS INTERCESSION?

The Greek noun, "enteuxus" is the word for "intercession". It means a "meeting with," a conversation or petition rendered on the behalf of others. Intercessory prayer is praying for the needs of others as we seek to enter the presence of God. Intercession is standing in the gap for another person. Intercessory prayer is that aspect of prayer which unselfishly invokes God's blessings on behalf of others. An intercessor is one who takes the place of another or pleads another's case. Intercession is the act of going on behalf of someone else who needs help from Almighty God, to be merciful and gracious unto someone else and not self.

Intercession is love on its knees. Prayer for others should be the basic burden of our prayer life because love is the law of life for Christians. Intercessory prayer, then, is going into the prayer closet with love and applying that love to our prayer.

Intercession prepares lost souls for salvation. Andrew Murray said, "God's intense longing to bless seems in some sense to be graciously limited by His dependence on intercession. God regards intercession as the highest expression of His people's readiness to receive and to yield themselves wholly to the working of His Almighty power." 10

Intercession is the heart's cry for souls. Intercession is the highest form of prayer since it deals with that priceless commodity, the soul of a man. Petition, though important, usually concerns things. Intercession concerns people, and people are priceless.

Intercession involves working together with God. Intercession involves standing beside God, working with Him, in the task of redeeming others. (1 Corinthians 3:9).

10 Waiting on God by Andrew Murray

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR INTERCESSION

The Biblical basis for the believer's ministry of intercessory prayer is our calling as priests unto God. The Word of God declares that we are a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5), a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), and a kingdom of priests (Revelation 1:5). The background for understanding this calling to priestly intercession is found in the Old Testament example of the Levitical priesthood. The priest's responsibility was to stand before and between. He stood before God to minister to Him with sacrifices and offerings and he also stood between a righteous God and sinful man bringing them together at the place of the blood sacrifice.

Hebrews 7:11-19 explains the difference between the Old and New Testament ministries of the priest. The Old Testament Levitical priesthood was passed on from generation to generation through the descendants of the tribe of Levi. "The Melchizedek priesthood" spoken of in this passage, is the "new order" of spiritual priests of whom the Lord Jesus is the High Priest. It is passed on to us through His blood and our spiritual birth as new creatures in Christ.

Jesus Christ is our model for intercessory prayer. Jesus stands before God and between Him and sinful man, just as the Old Testament priests did:

- "For there is one God, and one mediator (intercessor) between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).
- "It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).
- "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Jesus brings sinful man and a righteous God together at the place of the blood sacrifice for sin. No longer is the blood of animals necessary as it was in the Old Testament. We can now approach God on the basis of the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross of Calvary for the remission of sins. Because of the blood of Jesus, we can approach God boldly without timidity (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Jesus was an intercessor while He was here on earth. He prayed for those who were sick and possessed by demons. He prayed for His disciples. He even prayed for us when He interceded for all those who would believe on Him. Jesus

continued His ministry of intercession after His death and resurrection when He returned to Heaven. He now serves as our intercessor in Heaven.

In intercessory prayer, we follow the Old Testament priestly function and the New Testament pattern of Jesus - standing before God and between a righteous God and sinful man. In order to be effective standing "between" we must first stand "before" God to develop the intimacy necessary to fulfill this role.

Numbers 14 is one of the greatest accounts of intercessory prayer recorded in the Bible. Moses was able to stand between God and sinful man because he had stood "before" Him and had developed intimacy of communication. Numbers 12:8, records that God spoke with Moses as friend and not through visions and dreams as He had done with the other prophets.

As New Testament believers, we no longer sacrifice animals as in Old Testament times. We stand before the Lord to offer up spiritual sacrifices of praise (Hebrews 13:15) and the sacrifice of our own lives (Romans 12:1). It is on the basis of this intimate relationship with God that we can then stand "between" Him and others, serving as an advocate and intercessor on their behalf. Peter uses two words to describe this priestly ministry: "Holy" and "royal."

- Holiness is required to stand before the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). We are able to do this only on the basis of the righteousness of Christ, not our own righteousness.
- Royalty is descriptive of the kingly authority that is delegated to us as members of the "royal family," so to speak, with legitimate access to the throne room of God.

THE PURPOSE FOR INTERCESSION

The purpose of intercession is to:

- Secure Healing (James 5:14-16);
- Avert Judgment (Numbers 14:11-21);
- Insure Deliverance (I Samuel 7:5-9);
- Give Blessings (Numbers 6:23-27);
- Obtain Restoration (Ezekiel 22; Job 48:8-10);
- Encourage Repentance (Romans 10:1-4);
- Draw nearer to God as Abba Father to change His mind (Exodus 32:7-14).

WHO SHOULD WE INTERCEED FOR?

In 1st Timothy 2:1 God tells us to pray for everyone. We should be praying for our church leaders, local government and for our president and our nation. We need to stand in the gap for our family, friends and our church family. We need to cry out to God for those that don't know the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF INTERCESSION

- Abraham's prayer for Sodom: Genesis 18:20-33
- Moses prayer, interceding for Israel: Exodus 32:11-13, 32:31-32
- Ezra's prayer, identifying with the sins of his people: Ezra 9:6-15
- Elijah asks God to reveal Himself to the people: 1 Kings 18:36-37
- Daniel's prayer, identifying with the sins of his people: Daniel 9:4-19
- Nehemiah's prayer, identifying with the sins of his people: Nehemiah 1:3-11
- Before going to the father, Jesus intercedes for His followers: John 17:6-26
- Stephen's prayer, for his murderers, at the point of his death Acts 7:60
- Paul's prayer for the Ephesians: Ephesians 3:14-20
- Paul's prayer for the Philippians: Philippians 1:9-11
- Paul's prayer for the Colossians: Colossians 1:9-17

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INTERCESSOR

An intercessor is a born-again believer, who has been washed in the Blood of Jesus. Someone who intercedes on behalf of others; who is God fearing and willing to sacrifice his schedule, time and plans for another; who does not mind being interrupted by the Holy Spirit for prayer; who has a heart after God's own heart; who lives a life of repentance and is sanctified unto God, holy and set apart for God; who is confident that God hears his prayers and will answer them.

The Nine Attributes of an Intercessor:

- **Advocacy:** We need to be an advocate for others. This means that we will be willing to go in another person's place and plead their case before God, acting like Jesus (Matthew 23:37)
- **Abandonment:** We must be willing to abandon self. Willing to abandon all self-interest about what is being prayed;
- **Acceptance:** We must be willing to accept others, even if it means that you will be praying for your enemies to receive a blessing.

- **Awareness:** Be aware of the needs of others. This requires that the intercessor is sensitive to the needs of others and looks beyond the outward appearance of the individual.
- **Accountability:** Be accountable for the results. Being willing to risk placing yourself in the position of fulfilling the need (Exodus 32:32, Romans 9:3)
- **Agonizing:** Be willing to bear the agony of others, willing to bear the hurts of others and feel what they feel. Jesus was touched by our infirmities; Matthew 8:16-17 "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with [his] word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare [our] sicknesses."
- **Availability:** Be available to the work of intercession, willing to always be available for God; holy, submissive, yielded, and humble. The world looks for ability. God only needs availability He can enable and equip;
- **Abiding:** John 15:5-7 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who parts from me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you stay joined to me and my words remain in you, you may ask any request you like, and it will be granted!" The intercessor should have a knowledge of God's Word: Praying the Word of God is powerful. As believers, we must study to show ourselves approved unto God. We must keep our minds transformed and renewed with God's Word that we not be conformed to this world. We must keep the Word of God on our mouth, in our eyes and ears, writing it on the tablets of our hearts. Isaiah 34:16 "Search the book of the Lord, and see what he will do. He will not miss a single detail. Not one of these birds and animals will be missing, and none will lack a mate, for the Lord has promised this. His Spirit will make it all come true." We must read to know what to say. We must meditate so we can believe what we speak. We must speak to release the power. Knowledge of God's Word is the only way to know your blood-bought rights and authority against the devil.
- **Authority:** Pray with authority, willing to go boldly before the Throne of God without begging, understanding the authority that belongs to the born-again believer.

TWO ASPECTS OF INTERCESSION

The two aspects of intercession are:

- 1) to intercede with God; and
- 2) to stand against Satan, demons, sickness, ungodly circumstances, etc., on behalf of others.

The prophet Ezekiel points out that an intercessor must be willing to feel and bear the burdens of those for whom intercession is made (Ezekiel 4:4)

TRAVAILING IN INTERCESSION:

Intercession is prayer that pleads with God for the needs of others. It involves taking hold of God's will and refusing to let go until His will comes to pass. It involves travailing before God until something happens – something is birthed.

The definition of travail from Webster's *New World Dictionary* is simple:

- very hard work.
- the pains of childbirth.
- intense pain; agony, to toil.
- to suffer the pains of childbirth."

Travail is a specific type of prayer which births (Isaiah 66:7-9), as well as wars (Isaiah 42:12-14). When a person enters a time period or season of travail (birthing and/or warring), they will experience it as a heaviness, a weight, a burden, a deep penetrating concern, or an uneasiness over a situation or condition that they cannot shake. Sometimes, travail extends to weeks or months, particularly when God burdens a person over a nation.

Often time, a person will initially interpret travail emotionally and become introspective, suspecting something is wrong with them. However, it is not an emotion, it is the burden of the Lord, and the voice of the Lord coming to a person as a burden to draw them into partnering with Him to birth and/or to war. The only way travail will be released is through prayer. The person will feel weighted down by a situation until it is released through sustained prayer.

PRAYER THAT TRAVAILS IS BIRTHING PRAYER:

In scripture, eight barren women were specifically named who were healed from barrenness!

- Sarah, who brought forth Isaac (Genesis 11:30, 16:1, 18:1-15, 21:1-8)
- Rebekah, who brought forth Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:21-26)
- Rachel, who brought forth Joseph and Benjamin (Genesis 29:31, 30:1,22-24, 35:16-18)
- Manoah's wife, who brought forth Samson (Judges 13:2-24)
- Ruth, who brought forth Obed (Ruth 4:13)
- Hannah, who brought forth Samuel (1 Samuel 1:2-20)
- Elizabeth, who brought forth John the Baptist (Luke 1:7-13,57)
- Zion: Isaiah 66:8 "Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons."

They had several things in common.

- They were desperate.
- They cried out to the Lord.
- They each brought forth either a prophet or a deliverer of the nation.

SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES

Jesus travailed before He died: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." (Isaiah 53:11). We see the fulfillment of this prophecy in the Garden of Gethsemane. "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." Luke 22:42-44

Jesus travailed at the tomb of Lazarus. "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in his spirit, and was troubled." John 11:33

Elijah prayed fervently: "And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. "Go look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "Go

back." The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'" I Kings 18:41-45. It is interesting to note that the scriptures described the posture that Elijah assumed during this time of prayer as the same posture women of his day assumed during childbirth. "Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops." James 5:17-18 (NIV)

Hannah poured out her soul before the Lord: "As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine." Not so, my lord." Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." I Samuel 1:12-16

The Holy Spirit travails through us. "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance to the will of God." Romans 8:26-27

The Apostle Paul travailed: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." Galatians 4:19

CHARACTERISTIC OF TRAVAILING

There are three basic facts about travail:

- **Travail is the groaning part of prayer.** (Exodus 6:5, Psalm 12:5; Psalm 79:11; Romans 8:22,23,26)
- **Travail is the energy put into our prayer.** It is the might and force of our prayer and concerns the intensity with which we pray.
- **Travail is the depth of desire in prayer.** Desire precedes prayer, accompanies it. Prayer is really nothing but the oral expression of desire. The deeper the desire, the stronger the prayer (Matthew 11:24 & James 4:3). Jesus in Gethsemane prayed in such agony the bloody sweat stood out on His face.

WHAT CAN I DO?

While we understand the importance of travail and that it is the work of the Holy Spirit, what do we need to do to be a part of the birthing process?

- We need to have a willing heart.
- We need to be in communion with God.
- We need to be willing to carry a God given prayer burden.
- We need to be willing to pray it through however the Holy Spirit may choose to lead us to do so.

"We are "birthers" for God. The Holy Spirit wants to "bring forth" through us. Jesus said in John 7:38, "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water". "Innermost being" is the word koilia, which means "womb". We are the womb of God upon the earth. We are not the source of life, but we are carriers of the source of life. We do not generate life, but we release, through prayer, Him who does." 11

SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN INTERCESSION

"I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth." Isaiah 62:6-7

Intercession is warfare. Intercessory prayer takes place in this spiritual world where the battles for our own lives, our families, our friends and our nation are won or lost. Spiritual warfare is a pro-active approach to our faith. We actively resist the devil when his hosts harass us. We actively pursue spiritual disciplines that will make us stronger and better prepared. We actively engage the enemy when people are in spiritual bondage. We utilize prayer as a weapon to penetrate strongholds that cannot be reached in any other way.

The Bible uses several metaphors to describe the "fight of faith" (1Timothy 6:12) that the believer must wage against the evil one:

- **A boxer:** 1 Corinthians 9:26 "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air ..."

11 Dutch Sheets, Intercessory Prayer

- **A soldier:** 2 Timothy 2:3-5 "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Ephesians 6:11-17 "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.... take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore ..."
- **A wrestler:** Ephesians 6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY IN THE BATTLE

Every child of God has been given a promise of victory over Satan.

- Isaiah 54:17 "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord ..."
- Malachi 4:3 "And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."
- Luke 10:19 "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."
- Romans 8:38-39 "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers ... nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- James 4:7 " ... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
- 1 John 4:4 "You ... have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUAL WARRIOR

The spiritual warrior is alert: A spiritual warrior has to be alert to the activity of the enemy. This alertness is by no means fear or paranoia. It is important that we recognize who our enemy is and what his tactics are. "For we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). Our battle is "not against flesh and blood", "but against ... spiritual wickedness." "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal ..." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Therefore as alert soldiers of God we need to be aware of the main devices of the devil:

- Subtlety: Genesis 3: 1 "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field ..." (See also 2 Corinthians 11:3)
- Doubt: Genesis 3:1 "Yea, hath God said ...?" See also Luke 4:3, 9; Matthew 4:3, 6 "If thou be the Son of God ... if ..."
- Lies: Genesis 3:4 and John 8:44

The spiritual warrior knows who they are: A spiritual warrior knows his inheritance in Christ. He knows God's promises and is not easy prey to the lies and deceptions of the enemy, who tries to call these promises and inheritance into question. Therefore, the warrior seeks constantly to fortify himself in an understanding of God's truth which he wears like armor for protection. A spiritual warrior thinks like an overcomer with a victorious attitude, understanding what his authority is in Christ. What is the Believer's Authority? Luke 10:19-20 "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

The spiritual warrior is focused: The spiritual warrior is focused not on the things of this world, but on Jesus Christ (Heb 12:2). He is able to carefully guard against the attempts to distract him. He recognizes that the enemy likes to entangle God's people in the cares of this world or provoke us to react in the flesh. The importance therefore is to keep his eyes on the Lord and standing in faith upon God's character, not in his own abilities.

The spiritual warrior has put on the whole armor each day (Ephesians 6): The spiritual warrior must be clothed in the armour of God. This is done by reading the word and knowing Christ and applying His teachings. When we stand in Christ we are victorious. He fights for us as we are steadfast in him. The armour that he is clothed in is:

- The belt of Truth: This is being clothed in honesty and integrity, truth which is the Word and Jesus. This is our foundation, everything a Christian does is to be based on truth which is the Word applied in our lives.
- The Breastplate of Righteousness: This is our protective gear which protects our vital organs. Satan attacks this area often by condemning us for not being righteous and therefore we need to know that we are standing on His merit and work not our own. No one can be righteous on their own. It is Christ's righteousness we are clothed in (Isa.59:17, Phil.3:9, 2 Cor.5:21). We are positionally righteous, however we are daily conformed to the Son of God making us holy in a practical sense. If we do what is required of us even when we fail, the enemy cannot condemn us. If we rest on Christ's merits, His grace we don't have to punish ourselves for failing.
- Feet that are ready to go bring the gospel of peace: This speaks of our servanthood to our Lord, dying to self-motives and living for His will. The Roman soldiers had special sandals that gave them security on the battlefield. This relates to Rom.10:15 "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace who bring glad tidings of good things." We are ambassadors of Christ to have people make peace with God. (2 Cor.5:18-21).
- The Shield of faith: This is our protection from the fiery darts (flaming arrows) of the enemy. This was a large shield big enough to protect the whole body.
- The Helmet of Salvation: This is to protect our minds with knowing we are in Him and in the faith. If we are unsure in the mind it will affect our walk and battle.
- The sword of the Spirit: This is our defensive weapon to win in the battles. To remember His promises and word that is applicable to our immediate situation. The Word which can cut and expose everything (Heb. 4:12) will do its ministry in our lives if we use it skillfully and in faith.

The spiritual warrior knows his weapons for warfare:

Praise: Throughout the Bible, you will find examples of God's weapon of praise in action.

Numbers 31:6-7 "Then Moses sent them out, a thousand men from each tribe, and Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest led them into battle. They carried along the holy objects of the sanctuary and the trumpets for sounding the charge. They attacked Midian just as the Lord had commanded Moses, and they killed all the men.

1 Samuel 16:23 "And whenever the tormenting spirit from God troubled Saul, David would play the harp. Then Saul would feel better, and the tormenting spirit would go away."

Acts 16:24-26 "So he took no chances but put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!"

Why is praise important in spiritual warfare?

- **Praise Silences the Enemy:** "Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, because of your enemies, that you may silence the enemy and the avenger." (Psalm 8:2). And Jesus said to them, "Yes, have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise.'" (Matthew 21:16).
- **God dwells in the praises of His people:** "But You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel". (Psalm 22:3). On one occasion, Jehoshaphat, the King of Israel, came against a vast opposing army of many nations bent on Israel's destruction (2 Chronicles 20). The King put at the front lines of the army people who praised the Lord with singing saying, "Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever". It is no accident that David, perhaps the mightiest warrior for God in Old Testament times, was a man of praise. His strength was rooted in the joy he gave God through praising and worshiping God. How much more in these New Testament times, we, who are commanded to "continually offer up to God the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips which confess His Name" (Hebrews 13:15), are called to overcome the devil and his demons, and all their works, using praise as a mighty God ordained weapon for the destruction of their plans and works.

The Word of God: When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan (see Luke 4:1-13), He overcame the devil using the weapon of the Word. Rather than arguing directly with Satan's suggestions, as many Christians try to do, Jesus simply quoted the Word of God as it applied to the suggestion. When Satan tried to suggest a course of action for Jesus to prove his divinity and simultaneously satisfy his hunger, Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" (Luke 4:4). This silenced the enemy and ended the discussion on that point. Jesus used the Word of God once for each of the three main temptations which every son of man must face. These are: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The apostle John wrote, "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one." (1 John 2:14). We see then that we are called to grow up to the stage of being "young men", in whom the Word of God abides, and "no longer children, tossed about by every wind and wave of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). It is when, through much study and meditation on the Word of God, that word comes to live in us, and consume our thoughts, that we will be strong in the Lord. Jesus promised that if we abide in Him, and His Word abides in us, we will ask what we desire, and it will be done for us (John 15:7). This will include victory over Satan.

The Blood of Jesus: The Bible says in Revelation 12:11 "They overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony" The Blood of Jesus is another powerful weapon of the believer. It was with the Blood of Jesus, that Jesus overcame the enemy. "And having disarmed the powers and authorities he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2:15). The Blood of Jesus is the agent of cleansing, sanctification, protection, healing and deliverance all combined. The cleansing of the believer is an ongoing process everyday of our lives. As we read in 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness".

THE ROLE OF INTERCESSION IN EVANGELISM

History proves, beyond question, that prayer can change the world. A prayer warrior, on his knees, involves himself in a mission capable of altering the very destiny of men and nations.

THE FOCUS OF OUR PRAYER:

- We must focus prayer on the leaders of our world: Paul spoke to Timothy about "praying for all men" but specifically those in authority (one Tim 2:1-4).
- We must focus prayer on individual nations.
- We must focus prayer on all men: The High priest in the Old Testament came before God representing all the tribes of the nation of Israel (the breastplate). We as priests under the new covenant can make intercession for all men.
- We must focus prayer on the need for laborers (Matt 9:37-38)
- We must focus prayer on the need for revival and harvest.
- We must focus prayer on new converts (Luke 8:5-12, 2 Cor 4:3-4, Matt 13:15)
- We must focus prayer on the national churches in our lands

Psalms 2:8-9 "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

PRAYERWALKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

IS PRAYER WALKING BIBLICAL?

- Noah is described as "walking with God",
- Abraham was told to walk the land, for "I am giving it to you."
- Joshua was told "I will give every place where you set your foot as I promised Moses" (Joshua 1:3)
- The prophet Micah declared "All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever." (Micah 4:5)

WHAT IS PRAYER WALKING?

- Prayer walking is prayer that is targeted for the place where you are walking. It is praying at a specific location. While "prayer-walking" is not mentioned as such in the Bible, praying on location most clearly is mentioned. When Jesus received the message of the illness of Lazarus, He could have prayed for healing in his present location, and may well have done so for he stayed there "two more days" before announcing to the disciples, "Lazarus is dead." There may be other reasons why Jesus chose to go then to Bethany, but on arrival, he prayed before calling out, "Lazarus, come forth!" (John 11:1-44). This was intercession on location.
- Prayer walking provides light in dark places. Since Jesus lives within you and the Holy Spirit works through you, there is a sense in which your prayer-walking provides light in dark places and salt in unsavory places (Matthew 5:13-16). If your body really is a "temple of God" (I Corinthians 3:16) then where you go, you represent His presence.
- Prayer walking is intercessory prayer because it is praying on behalf of another person.
- Prayer walking is targeted prayer. It has a purpose and therefore is able to answer the following questions: what the purpose of this prayer? Where will I walk?
- Prayer walking is taking authority and territory back from the devil. When God made a covenant with Abraham He said to him; "Lift your eyes now and

look from the place where you are-northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." (Genesis 13:14-17)

- Prayer walking is a means by which we assess the spiritual condition of the neighborhood. Several centuries after God first gave the land to Abraham and his descendants the time was getting close for the Israelites to enter into it. After their delivery from slavery in Egypt, the Lord told Moses to; "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel." (Numbers 18:2) Moses gave the twelve men he sent this direction; "see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many; whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land." (Numbers 13:18-20). Just as the twelve spies were sent to assess the land of Canaan, a primary purpose of prayer walking is to assess the spiritual condition of the block. Joshua and Caleb saw the land with God's eyes and they said; "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." (Numbers 13:30) That's the way God wanted them to see the land - in faith. He certainly didn't send them into Canaan as spies to convince them it was bad land and unconquerable. In prayer walking we see the land through God's eyes even as we honestly assess the obstacles. Those obstacles become prayer items to overcome, not abort our mission
- Prayer walking is a means by which we formulate strategy: Nehemiah was a man in the Old Testament sent by God to Jerusalem after Israel's seventy years of captivity in Persia. His job was to rebuild Jerusalem. Three days after arrival in Jerusalem, this is what Nehemiah says; "Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode. And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire." (Nehemiah 2:12-13). After his thorough assessment of the terrible situation in the city he gathered the Jewish leadership together. "Then I said to them, 'You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach.'" (Nehemiah 2:17) Nehemiah formulated a strategy for recovery

and then acted upon it and had great success. Formulating a strategy is a big part of prayer walking. After we walk the land in order to take authority over it and assess its spiritual condition, we strategize. We plan the best way to turn hopeless situations around and restore God's kingdom. Wherever there is desolation we apply our prayers and take any other actions that might be needed. Until we truly understand what we are dealing with it is hard to come up with the best possible plan. Prayer walking gets us up close and personal with our neighborhood or city so we can target our prayers effectively.

- Prayer walking is preparing the way of the Lord. "God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world, the better the world will be and the mightier the forces against evil everywhere. Prayer, in one phase of its operation, is a disinfectant and a preventive. It purifies the air; it destroys the contagion of evil". 12

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

Start a prayer walking group with your homecell (or your area of leadership) in the location where you are situated. Maintain a prayer journal for three weeks of what you feel are the obstacles that you need to pray for in the location.

Do you find that your prayer walking has made a difference to your ministry? The atmosphere?

Were you provided with a strategy concerning how to reach out more to those in the area?

What has been the response from the prayer group during these three weeks?

12 E.M. Bounds, Purpose In Prayer)

POWER OF AGREEMENT

Matthew 18:19 "I also tell you this: If two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you."

What is the prayer of agreement?

This is a time of prayer when two or more people come together and agree with one another concerning the Word of God, that the thing that you are praying about and for will come to pass. The place of agreement is the place of power. It is a basic key to the Kingdom of God. There is great power in agreeing with God, His Word and other Christians. God has promised that if we are in agreement with Him, through believing in Him and His Word, then He will hear and answer us when we pray.

THE POWER OF AGREEMENT WILL:

- Bring victory: Exodus 17:12 "Moses' arms finally became too tired to hold up the staff any longer. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side, holding up his hands until sunset."
- Bring a tenfold increase in power: Deut. 32:30 "How could one person chase a thousand of them, and two people put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the Lord had given them up?"
- Help you make the right decisions: Acts 1:24 "Then they all prayed for the right man to be chosen. "O Lord," they said, "you know every heart. Show us which of these men you have chosen"
- Bring the Holy Spirit: Acts 2:1 "Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place".
- Bring the Presence of God: Matthew 18:19-20 "'I also tell you this: If two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I am there among them."
- Bring miracles: Acts 3:1-9 "Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about

to enter, he asked them for some money. Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting a gift. But Peter said, "I don't have any money for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and anklebones were healed and strengthened. He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God."

- Bring great power: Acts 4:24, 31 "So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them... 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"
- Brings freedom: "Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church" (Acts 12:5). Acts 12:11 "Peter finally realized what had happened. "It's really true!" he said to himself. "The Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jews were hoping to do to me!"
- Brings deliverance: Acts 16:25-26 "Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!" 2 Cor. 1:8-11 "I think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and completely overwhelmed, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we learned not to rely on ourselves, but on God who can raise the dead. And he did deliver us from mortal danger. And we are confident that he will continue to deliver us. He will rescue us because you are helping by praying for us. As a result, many will give thanks to God because so many people's prayers for our safety have been answered."

PRAYER AND FASTING

Isaiah 58:6-9 ""No, the kind of fasting I want calls you to free those who are wrongly imprisoned and to stop oppressing those who work for you. Treat them fairly and give them what they earn. I want you to share your food with the hungry and to welcome poor wanderers into your homes. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. "If you do these things, your salvation will come like the dawn. Yes, your healing will come quickly. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the Lord will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' he will quickly reply."

DEFINITION

There are two main overriding principles related to fasting in the Bible.

First, biblical fasting is going without food. The noun translated "fast" or "a fasting" is "*tsom*" in the Hebrew and "*nesteia*" in the Greek language. It means the voluntary abstinence from food. The literal Hebrew translation would be "not to eat." The literal Greek means "no food."

Second, biblical fasting is linked with serious seasons of prayer. The more seriously we approach prayer and fasting, the more serious the results we will experience.

Therefore, fasting is the spiritual exercise of practicing self-discipline (the denial of food, and/or things and persons); and the exercise of the heart before God in order to minister to and to glorify God. It is done unto God, at His choosing and leading, to wait upon Him for His unmerited grace.

THE BIBLE AND FASTING

The practice of fasting was common in both the Old and the New Testament:

The Old Testament law specifically *required* prayer and fasting for only one occasion, which was the Day of Atonement. This custom became known as "the day of fasting" (Jeremiah 36:6) or "the Fast" (Acts 27:9). However we see proof that fasting also took place under other circumstances:

- Moses fasted during the 40 days and 40 nights he was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God (Exodus 34:28).

- King Jehoshaphat called for a fast in all Israel when they were about to be attacked by the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chronicles 20:3).
- In response to Jonah's preaching, the men of Nineveh fasted and put on sackcloth (Jonah 3:5).
- Prayer and fasting was often done in times of distress or trouble. David fasted when he learned that Saul and Jonathan had been killed (2 Samuel 1:12).
- Nehemiah had a time of prayer and fasting upon learning that Jerusalem was still in ruins (Nehemiah 1:4).
- Darius, the king of Persia, fasted all night after he was forced to put Daniel in the den of lions (Daniel 6:18).

Prayer and fasting also occurred in the New Testament:

- Anna "worshipped night and day, fasting and praying" at the Temple (Luke 2:37).
- John the Baptist taught his disciples to fast (Mark 2:18).
- Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights before His temptation by Satan (Matthew 4:2).
- The church of Antioch fasted (Acts 13:2) and sent Paul and Barnabas off on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:3).
- Paul and Barnabas spent time in prayer and fasting for the appointment of elders in the churches (Acts 14:23)

WHAT WERE THE OCCASION FOR PRAYER AND FASTING?

Praying for health: "David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground" (2 Samuel 12:16)

Praying for safety: "There, by the Ahava Canal, I [Ezra] proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions" (Ezra 8:21).

As an act of repentance: "When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel was leader of Israel at Mizpah" (1 Samuel 7:6).

As a sign of mourning: "They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword" (2 Samuel 1:12).

Before making an important decision: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off....Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust" (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23).

IS FASTING FOR TODAY?

- Matthew 9:14 "One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast?"
- Mark 2:18 "John's disciples and the Pharisees sometimes fasted. One day some people came to Jesus and asked, "Why do John's disciples and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast?"
- Luke 5:33 "The religious leaders complained that Jesus' disciples were feasting instead of fasting. "John the Baptist's disciples always fast and pray," they declared, "and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. Why are yours always feasting?"

From scripture we note that fasting was not required of the disciples of Jesus. However, Jesus spoke of a day when there would be a place for fasting.

Matthew 6:16-18 "And **when you fast**, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, who try to look pale and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I assure you, that is the only reward they will ever get. **But when you fast**, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will suspect you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in secret. And your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you."

Jesus spoke of "when" you fast and not "if".

Why did the disciples not fast? Matthew 9:14-15 "One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast?" Jesus responded, "Should the wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Someday he will be taken from them, and then they will fast."

Should we then make it a practice to pray and fast? Definitely because there are many benefits that come from being obedient in this manner.

WHY DO WE FAST?

For Help in a New Venture in Ministry : Matthew 4:1-2 "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry." Acts 13:3 "Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

To Avert Some Danger or Threat: Ezra 8:21 "Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions." 2 Samuel 12:16 "David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground."

To Express Sorrow and Loss: 2 Samuel 1:12 "They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the Lord and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword" 1 Chronicles 10:12 "All the valiant men arose and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons and brought them to Jabesh, and they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days."

To Express Repentance and Grief for Sin: Joel 2:12-13 ""Yet even now," declares the Lord, "Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning; And rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the Lord

your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil."

To experience a breakthrough: Isaiah 58:8 "If you do these things, your salvation will come like the dawn. Yes, your healing will come quickly. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind."

WHAT GUIDELINES ARE SET FORTH IN SCRIPTURE CONCERNING FASTING?

It is to be done in a manner of humility: Matthew 6:16-18 ""And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, who try to look pale and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I assure you, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will suspect you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in secret. And your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you." Luke 18:9-14 "Then Jesus told this story to some who had great self-confidence and scorned everyone else: "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a dishonest tax collector. The proud Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For the proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored."

It is to be closely related to prayer and reading of the Word: Neh. 1:4 "When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven." Neh. 9:1-3 "On October 31 the people returned for another observance. This time they fasted and dressed in sackcloth and sprinkled dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. The Book of the Law of the Lord their God was read aloud to them for about three hours. Then for three more hours they took turns confessing their sins and worshiping the Lord their God." Luke 2:37 "She was now eighty-four years old. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer."

It can be either an absolute fast or a partial one:

- Absolute fasts: Deut. 9:9 "That was when I was on the mountain receiving the tablets of stone inscribed with the covenant that the Lord had made with you. I was there for forty days and forty nights, and all that time I ate nothing and drank no water." Deut. 9:18 "Then for forty days and nights I lay prostrate before the Lord, neither eating bread nor drinking water. I did this because you had sinned by doing what the Lord hated, thus making him very angry." Ezra 10:6 "Then Ezra left the front of the Temple of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. He spent the night there, but he did not eat any food or drink. He was still in mourning because of the unfaithfulness of the returned exiles." Acts 9:9 "So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. He remained there blind for three days. And all that time he went without food and water." Acts 27:33 "As the darkness gave way to the early morning light, Paul begged everyone to eat. "You haven't touched food for two weeks," he said.
- It can be a partial fast (an abstinence from certain foods only): Daniel 10:3 "All that time I had eaten no rich food or meat, had drunk no wine, and had used no fragrant oils."

It should be done for a specific time period: Bible personalities fasted and sought God diligently until they obtained from God what they desired (see the examples of Hannah, I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18; and Paul, Acts 9:9,17-19) – or until the Lord made it evident that what they requested simply would not be obtained (as in the case of David, II Samuel 12:15-23). The length of a fast may vary. It can be:

- One night (Dan 6:18)
- One day (1 Sam 7:6, 2 Sam 1:12, 3:35, Judges 20:26)
- Three days and three nights (Esther 4:16, Acts 9:9, 17-19)
- Seven days (1 Sam 31:13, 2 Sam 12:16-33)
- Fourteen days (Acts 27:33-34)
- Twenty one days (Dan 10:3-13)
- Forty days (Ex 24:18, 34:28, 1 Kings 19:8, Matt 4:2)

HOW TO BEGIN YOUR FAST

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these six basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

STEP 1: Set Your Objective: Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Make this a priority in your fasting.

STEP 2: Make Your Commitment: Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matt 6:16-18, 9:14-15). For Him it was a matter of *when* believers would fast, not *if* they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- The time period for the fast: one meal, one day, a week etc
- The type of fast that God wants you to go on: a Daniel fast, a total fast, juice and water etc?
- The type of activities you will restrict during this period: Television, reading secular books, sporting activities etc.
- The length of time that you will spend with God in prayer during the fast.

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

STEP 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually: The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Confess your sins and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- Seek forgiveness from those whom you have offended and forgive all those who have hurt you (Mark 11:25, Luke 11:24, 17:3-4)
- Surrender your life fully to Christ and refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1-2)
- Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace etc (Psalm 48:9-10, 103:1-10, 11-13)
- Have an expectant heart that God will do something for you during the time that you have set aside for prayer and fasting (Hebrews 11:6)

STEP 4: Prepare Yourself Physically: Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision. Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer. Do not rush into your fast. Prepare your body a few days before by:

- Eating smaller meals
- Avoiding high-fat and sugary foods
- Eating raw fruit and vegetables for two days before a full fast

When you are on the fast remember the following:

- Do not take any medication unless specified by a doctor.
- Limit your activity and only exercise moderately.
- Rest as much as your schedule permits
- Be prepared for mental and emotional problems – moodiness, impatience etc
- Expect physical discomforts for example dizziness, hunger pains, headaches, weakness, tiredness etc.

The first two or three days are usually the hardest. As you continue to fast, you will likely experience a sense of well-being both physically and spiritually. However, should you feel hunger pains, increase your liquid intake.

STEP 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule: For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

STEP 6: End Your Fast Gradually: Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

NOTABLE PRAYERS FOUND IN THE BIBLE

There are many notable prayers that we can use as examples when we pray.
For example:

Moses' Prayer for Israel in the Wilderness (Exodus 32:9-14)
Moses' Prayer for God's Presence (Exodus 33:9-13)
Moses' Prayer of Despondency (Numbers 11:4-17)
Joshua: A Prayer God Could Not Answer (Joshua 7:7-9)
Joshua: A Prayer that Produced a Miracle (Joshua 10:12-15)
Abraham's Prayer for Sodom (Genesis 18:16-33)
Hannah: A Cry and a Song (1 Samuel 1:1-20; 2:1-10)
Gideon's Prayer for a Sign (Judges 6:36-40)
David: A Prayer for God's Glory (Psalm 24)
David: A Prayer Acknowledging Personal Sin (Psalm 32)
David: A Prayer Answered (Psalm 40)
David's Prayer of Confession and Repentance (Psalm 51; 1 Samuel 11-12).
David's Praise-Prayers in the Psalms (Psalm 65 and others)
David's Prayer of Surrender to the Searcher (Psalm 139)
David: A Prayer at the End of Life (1 Chronicles 29:1-30)
Solomon: A Prayer for Wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-9)
Solomon: Hear and Forgive (2 Chronicles 6:1-7:4)
Elijah: A Prayer of Persistence (1 Kings 18:41-46)
Elijah: A Prayer of Futility (1 Kings 19:1-18)
Isaiah: A Prayer Admitting Sin (Isaiah 6:1-13)
Isaiah: A Prayer for Peace (Isaiah 26:3-12, 20-21)
Hezekiah's Prayers for the Israel's Defense (2 Kings 19:15-19) and for Extension of Life (2 Kings 20:1-7)
Job: Trusting God for Who He Is (Job 38:1-18; 40:1-5; 42:1-16)
Daniel: A Prayer for Understanding (Daniel 2:14-23)

Daniel's Confession on Behalf of His People (Daniel 9:4-19)
Jonah: A Prayer Out of Hell (Jonah 2:1-9)
Jonah: A Prayer from a Pouting Prophet (Jonah 4:2-3)
Habakkuk: Praying with God's Perspective (Habakkuk 3:1-19)
Nehemiah's Prayer for Success (Nehemiah 1)
The Levites: A prayer of Corporate Confession (Nehemiah 9:1-38)
Mary: A Prayer of Joy (Luke 1:26-56)
The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)
Jesus: A Farewell Prayer (John 17)
Jesus: A Prayer of Agony (Matthew 26:36-46)
Early Church: A Prayer of Preparation (Acts 1:4, 14)
Stephen: A Prayer of a Martyr (Acts 7:54-60)
Early Church: A Prayer for a Prisoner (Acts 12:1-17)
Paul: A Prayer of Conversion (Acts 9:1-6, 11)
Paul: A Prayer for Deliverance (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
Paul's Prayer for the Ephesian Church (Ephesians 1:15-23)
Paul's Prayer for Comprehension of Christ's Love (Ephesians 3:14-21)
James: A Prayer for Wisdom (James 1:5-8, 17)
James: Unanswered Prayers (James 4:2-3)
James: Prevailing Prayer (James 5:13-18)
Revelation: A Prayer of Praise to the Lamb (Revelation 5:9-10)
Revelation: A Prayer of the Glorified Saints (Revelation 19:1-10)
Revelation: A prayer of Consummation (Revelation 22:17, 20)

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