

LEARNING HOW TO PRAY

Prayer is the greatest privilege we have as the children of God. Man has always longed to talk to God, but did you know that our heavenly Father longs to talk with us and have intimate fellowship with us? Prayer should be as natural as breathing and as enjoyable as eating. God's heart is hungry for companionship with His children. His heart hunger is the reason for man and the reason for redemption. Of all things, what do you think the disciples of Jesus asked Him to teach them? They asked Him to teach them how to pray. Let's take a look at some principles of prayer.

A. What Is Prayer?

Prayer is our heavenly Father's invitation to visit with Him. Everything we are and have is because of Him. So prayer is simply talking it over with Him, getting His views, His plans, will, and carrying out these plans with His grace, ability and wisdom. It means that we are welcome to the Throne Room of Love. It is sons visiting their Father. It is children coming into the presence of a loving Father. Prayer keeps man in close contact with the Father and it enriches one spiritually. Prayer illuminates the mind, refreshes and heals the body and energizes our spirit. Prayer is a spiritual exercise; it is our spirit contacting the Father. But first, *you must choose to pray.*

B. Develop a Prayer Life

We are children of choice, and we are what we make ourselves. This prayer habit will be born of your own will. This habit is very hard for most people to form. However, it should never be a duty, for just like we don't enjoy those that visit us out of duty, so does our Heavenly Father (***Mathew 6:5***). We want those who love us to come be with us because they enjoy it and want to. We should think of prayer as a rare opportunity and a great honor to meet with the God of the universe. However, there are some practical guidelines to follow if you are going to maintain an active prayer life.

1. Find a Time

You have chosen to pray; now you must find a time when to pray. David said, "Evening, morning and noon will I pray." Your prayer must be organized; the Lord is not opposed to order (***I Cor. 14:40***). Few people succeed in praying unless you have a planned time set aside to pray. In finding the best time for daily prayer, give consideration to your personal life style. Don't try to do like someone else.

2. Find A Place

It helps if you establish in your home a place of prayer. ***Luke 11:1*** mentions that the Lord was praying in a certain place. Try to find a secret place, a (*closet*)

place where you can get alone with God. In the Bible, prayer was done in a number of places: at a well, in open fields, in chains, in the belly of a fish, standing in a river, at a grave, on a cross, in a dungeon, in a shipwreck. So you see, where you pray is not important, as long as you pray.

C. Blueprint For Prayer

Jesus referred to an hour of prayer (*Mat. 26:40*). His disciples asked Jesus how to pray. He answered it by teaching them the following prayer:

1. Our Father Who Is In Heaven

You acknowledge Him as your heavenly Father, and you thank Him for saving and making you His adopted son, and for all His blessings upon your life.

2. Hallowed Be Your Name

You worship His name, the name that is above every name “Jesus”. Whenever you pray, you must pray to our heavenly father in the name of Jesus. That is the name that is above every name, in heaven, on earth and under the earth (*Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9-11*). That is the covenant name, and it has power and authority to save, heal, and deliver (*Mark 16:15-16*). All that we do must be done in the name of Jesus because it is the only name recognized by God in Heaven (*Colossians 3:17*). Then you can worship Him for the attributes of each of Bible names (Ex. Jehovah-rohe, Jehova-rapha etc.).

3. Your Kingdom Come

This is where you pray for His Kingdom, which is within you (*Luke 17:20-21*), to be manifested in your life, home, family, church, city, country and the world. The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (*Romans 14:17*).

4. Your Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven

What is the will of God? The general will of God is found in His Word. You need to know that, as well as what His specific will is and then you can pray this upon you situation, family, church, city, nation etc. This is a good place to hear from God.

5. Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

In this part of your prayer, you may ask your Father for your personal needs. Feel confident to pray in faith for your personal needs, Jesus wants you to (*Matthew 7:7*). If we pray according to His will, we should not pray with fear but with faith, believing that He will hear us and grant us what we are asking Him (*I John 5:14-15; Hebrews 11:6*).

6. **Forgive Us Our Sins**

This is the part when we confess our sins and ask God to forgive us. Ask God to search your heart and show you any sins that you may not be aware of, but are still there like pride, unbelief, lust and un-forgiveness (*Psalms 139:23-24*).

7. **As We Forgive Those Who Sin Against Us**

When we have something against someone in our heart, God does not hear our prayer. If we want God to hear our prayers and forgive us of our sins, we must be willing to forgive others who have hurt and offended us (*Mark 11:25-26*). To forgive is to release someone who has hurt us, to cancel the debt that they owe us (*Mathew 18:21-35*). You cannot wait to feel like forgiving someone, but you must will to forgive.

To forgive is not an alternative, but a command from the Lord. Un-forgiveness is a trap from the enemy to bring you into captivity and bondage. When you refuse to forgive someone, you are hurting yourself, not them. It does not matter how many years ago something happened, if you have not forgiven them, the root of bitterness is still there in your heart, defiling you (*Hebrews 12:14-15*).

Make a list of all the people who have hurt you and forgive them from your heart, verbally expressing your forgiveness towards them. As you forgive, renounce all spirit of resentment, bitterness and hatred that may be in your heart. Ask God to forgive you for keeping all this un-forgiveness in your heart for all this time. If you blamed God for things that happened in you life, ask Him to forgive you. Also forgive yourself for all the mistakes you made, the Lord did (*Psalms 103:8-17*).

8. **Lead Us Not Into Temptation**

Now that you are born again Christian, you must make an attempt to avoid places and people that are a sort of temptation to you. One of the hardest things for a new convert is to try to stay away from friends they used to hang around with who were a source of temptation to them. These people may want you to continue to do those things with them, but now you are a different person and they may not be able understand that (*I Peter 4:1-4*).

Many new converts think they are strong enough to be able to hang around with their old buddies so they can win them to the Lord. But this strategy usually backfires. In time, when you are older in the things of God, you may be able to become friends and hang around with some sinners out there in order to win them to the Lord.

I strongly recommend that in the beginning of your conversion, you do not hang around with them in the hope of winning them to Christ. You are still not strong enough or experienced enough to answer most of their questions, and resist the temptation to do the things you used to do together. Try to just be a good witness to them and whenever you are invited to join them in something that is wrong or a source of temptation to you, just say: "no thanks" and go on your way.

Ask the Lord for His protection and to lead you in the straight and narrow path. As you walk with Him, He'll answer your prayers and show you what to do and what not to do, where to go and where not to go. Make a commitment to pray and read your Bible every day and persevere in it (*Ephesians 6:18*).

9. Deliver Us From The Evil One

The devil is real, and he is busy in this world doing all kinds of ungodly deeds by using those that are under his power. He is called the prince of this world (*John 12:31*). The Bible says that the devil has blinded the eyes of the unbelievers that the light of the gospel does not shine on them and be saved (*2 Corinthians 4:3-4*).

Ask the Lord to protect you from the attacks of the devil and deliver you from his traps. God has assigned an angel to each one of his children to protect and guide them throughout their pilgrimage in this life. Usually other angels are dispatched to help those that are in more intense battlefields in times of danger.

10. For Yours Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory Forever And Ever Amen.

Here is where you close your prayer with worship and exaltation of God. You begin prayer with worship, and you end your prayer with worship. Thank Him every day for saving you and giving you the precious Holy Spirit. Remember that we were created to worship God. He loves you to worship Him in spirit and in truth (*John 4:22-24*).