

P

PRAYER

Talking To God

Study #16

According to Acts 2:42, the young Christians, along with the older believers, “*continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, AND IN PRAYERS.*” These Christians had developed from the very beginning of their new life in Christ some definite habits – including prayer.

Through His Word, the Bible, God speaks to the Christian. In **prayer**, the Christian speaks back to God. Yet in this busy, bustling world, both Bible

Lesson Overview

- I. What is Prayer?
- II. Why Should I Pray?
- III. How Do I Pray?
- IV. When Should I Pray?
- V. Where Should I Pray?
- VI. Will My Prayers Always Be Answered?
- VII. What are Some Hindrances to Answered Prayer?
- VIII. What Things Should I Pray for?



study and prayer are neglected by so many.

I. WHAT IS PRAYER?

Read over the previous study about prayer. It will be found in the second half of the D lesson (**D**aily Walk).

- A. *The word “pray” means “to ___ ___ ___ (see lesson D).”*
- B. *Give a Scripture reference showing this to be so.*

- C. *According to 1 John 5:14, prayer is asking for
A ___ T ___ ___ according to His will.*
- D. *According to Philippians 4:6, prayer is asking for
E ___ T ___ ___ .*

II. WHY SHOULD I PRAY?

The Bible teaches us that prayer is both a COMMAND and a PRIVILEGE.

- A. *We Are Commanded To Pray.*
1. Luke 18:1 – Men ought A ___ ___ ___ to pray.
 2. Colossians 4:2 – C ___ ___ ___ in prayer.
 3. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 – Pray without C ___ ___ ___ .
 4. Matthew 7:7 – ___ ___ .
- B. *We Have the Privilege to Pray.*
1. John 16:24 – Prayer brings fullness of J ___ .
 2. Hebrews 4:16 – We are invited to come B ___ ___ ___ unto the throne of grace.

III. HOW DO I PRAY?

In Luke 11:1, the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ asked of Him a noble thing when they said, “*Lord, teach us to pray.*” In response Jesus gave them the **Model Prayer**

(commonly mis-named the “Lord's Prayer”). You can read this in Luke 1:2-4 and Matthew 6:9-13.

Below are some of the “essentials” in praying:

A. *What Posture Should I Adopt When Praying?*

1. Mark 11:25 – We may S___ and pray.
2. 1 Kings 8:54 – We may K___ and pray.
3. Acts 16:13 – We may S___ and pray.
4. Matthew 26:39 – We may fall on our F___ and pray.

The “Lord’s Prayer”

Christians identify Jesus’ model prayer as *The Lord’s Prayer*. You will recognize it’s beginning, “*Our Father, which art in heaven....*” This is not a prayer Jesus kept praying, nor was He instructing His disciples to continually recite it. It was (and is) a model to teach us *how to pray*.

From your study of these Scriptures, what do you conclude about the posture we should adopt when we pray? _____

B. *To Whom Do I Address My Prayer?*

Study: Matthew 6:9; John 16:23; Acts 12:5; John 15:16. I am to pray to _____

C. *In Whose Name Do I Pray?*

Study: John 14:14 and John 16:24. I am to pray _____



in _____ ' Name.

D. *In Whose Power Am I To Pray?*

Read: Ephesians 6:18 and Jude 20. I am to pray in (the power of) the _____ .

E. *The Right Attitudes in Prayer.*

Listed below are some key attitudes in praying. Study the Scripture passages given, then jot each reference down next to the “prayer attitude” they teach.

What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name?
This is not just a formula to tack on to the end of your prayer. It means to pray in harmony with Christ's will; it is asking on the basis of Christ's merits. The opposite would be to pray according to our own will and to come to God with our own agenda and on our own merits.

Psalm 62:8; Matthew 6:9; Matthew 6:10b; Luke 11:3; Luke 11:5-8; Luke 18:1-5; Romans 15:30; Philippians 4:6b; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:5-7; James 5:16d; 1 Peter 5:7; 1 John 5:14.

1. Reverence: _____
2. Boldness: _____
3. Faith: _____
4. Thanksgiving: _____
5. Persistence: _____
6. Dependence: _____
7. Earnestness: _____
8. Confidence: _____
9. Openness: _____

IV. WHEN SHOULD I PRAY?

There are two Bible answers to this question:

- A. *I Am To Pray W_____*
C_____ (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

This means that we are to be in the attitude of prayer, ready to pray (“on praying ground”) at all times. It is not praying “non-stop”, but praying repeatedly throughout the day.

There is NO TIME when we cannot pray.

Read also: Luke 18:1; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:18.

- B. *I Am To Have Definite, Set Times of Prayer.*

1. Daniel prayed _____ times each day (Daniel 6:10).
2. David prayed each _____ (Psalm 5:3).
3. The Lord Jesus prayed a G_____ W_____ B_____ D_____ (Mark 1:35).
4. The apostles kept set times of prayer (Acts 3:1).

It is vital that you develop a pattern of regular prayer. Always begin the day with prayer (Proverbs 8:17).

V. WHERE SHOULD I PRAY?

There are three *kinds* of prayer found in the Word of God. Each of them ought to be part of the Christian's prayer life:

- A. *Personal Prayer*

Read: Matthew 6:6.

1. Jesus calls the place for this kind of praying a C_____, which means we need a

solitary place to pray – a place without interruption.

2. Jesus assures us God hears and answers our S _ _ _ _ _ prayers.

B. Public Prayer

Read: Acts 4:24; Acts 12:5,12 and Ephesians 5:19,20.

1. This kind of praying is usually done in church meetings and gatherings of believers.
2. In such meetings one person at a time speaks the public prayer (1 Corinthians 14:23,40).
3. When one leads the congregation in prayer, sometimes others participate in the prayer by saying *Amen* (“so be it”) at its conclusion (1 Corinthians 14:16).

C. Partnership Prayer

Read: 1 Samuel 12:23

1. Samuel’s life illustrates two important thoughts about prayer:
 - a. Others prayed for Samuel (this was Hannah, see 1 Samuel 1:10-11).
 - b. Samuel prayed for others (1 Samuel 12:23).
2. Paul prayed with other Christians (Acts 20:36).

It will be a blessing in your life if you seek out another believer in the Church to become “prayer partners” with. Ask God to lead you to someone with whom you can spend time in prayer together.

VI. WILL MY PRAYERS ALWAYS BE ANSWERED?

A. *There Are Two Conditions For Prayer To Be Answered.*

1. Look up: 1 John 5:14
 - a. We are to pray “. . . *according T*____
*H*____ *W*____. . . . “
 - b. How do we know God's will? (See: John 15:7.)

2. Look up: Matthew 21:22. We are to pray
“. . . *B*____. . . . “

PRAYER *Answered*

I ASKED FOR STRENGTH THAT I MIGHT ACHIEVE;	⇒	<i>I was made weak That I might obey.</i>
I ASKED FOR HEALTH THAT I MIGHT DO GREATER THINGS;	⇒	<i>I was given grace that I might do better things.</i>
I ASKED FOR RICHES THAT I MIGHT BE HAPPY;	⇒	<i>I was given poverty That I might be wise.</i>
I ASKED FOR POWER THAT I MIGHT HAVE THE PRAISE OF MEN;	⇒	<i>I was given weakness That I might feel the need of God.</i>
I ASKED FOR ALL THINGS THAT I MIGHT ENJOY LIFE;	⇒	<i>I was given life That I might enjoy all things.</i>
I RECEIVED NOTHING THAT I ASKED FOR,	⇒	<i>All that I hoped for, and...</i>

MY PRAYER WAS ANSWERED!

Why is it necessary to exercise faith when we pray?
(See: Hebrews 11:6.) _____

B. *God ALWAYS Answers Prayer, But In Three Possible Ways:*

- ⇒ YES – Psalms 84:11c – to good things
- ⇒ NO – James 4:3 – to harmful things
- ⇒ WAIT – Luke 11:8 – to see how much you wisely desire it?

VII. WHAT ARE SOME HINDRANCES TO ANSWERED PRAYER?

- A. *Unconfessed* _ _ _ (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1,2).
- B. *S* _ _ _ _ _ motives (James 4:3).
- C. *Failure to F* _ _ _ _ _ others (Mark 11:24,25).
- D. *Poor relationships in M* _ _ _ _ _ (1 Peter 3:7).
- E. *Failure to L* _ _ _ _ _ to God's Word (Proverbs 28:9).
- F. *Lack of compassion* (Proverbs 21:13).
- G. *Stubbornness* (Zechariah 7:8-14).

How do we get any hindrances removed? Read: 1 John 1:9.

VIII. WHAT THINGS SHOULD I PRAY FOR?

A. *Look up: Romans 10:1*

1. For whom was Paul concerned?
-

2. What was his prayer for them?

B. *Look up: 1 Timothy 2:1-4*

List three groups of people we are to pray for:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

C. *What does the Lord want us to pray for, according to Matthew 9:37,38?* _____

D. *According to Ephesians 6:19,20, what should we pray for those who serve the Lord in the Gospel ministry?* _____

E. *Matthew 5:44 instructs us to pray for whom?*

F. *According to 1 Samuel 12:23, failure to pray for others is* _ _ _ .

G. *Look up the following Scriptures and make a “prayer list” of things we should ask for ourselves.*

1. Matthew 6:11 _____
2. James 1:5 _____
3. Matthew 26:41 _____
4. Psalm 19:14 _____
5. Psalm 34:4 _____
6. Psalm 37:5 _____
7. Psalm 51:2,10 _____
8. Psalm 119:18 _____
9. Psalm 119:34 _____
10. Psalm 119:133 _____

SPIRITUAL GROWTH ASSIGNMENT:

- Read your Q Lesson (**Q**uestions Often Asked) and answer all the questions.
- Continue reading through the New Testament *at your own pace*.
- Take sermon notes using your *Spiritual Journal* and be prepared to share highlights next week.
- Give out copies of *The Amazing Story Behind Amazing Grace*.
- Where would you like to meet for next week's session?
- Be sure to bring your Bible, pen, **Q** Lesson, and *Spiritual Journal*.

THOUGHTS ON PRAYER

Excerpted from *Does God Still Guide*, by J. Sidlow Baxter, Zondervan Publishing House.

A prayerless life can never be a God-guided life. That may seem too obvious to need saying; but it is one of those axioms which, despite their self-evident truth, need often repeating, so slow are we to act on them. Because of its varied facets and bearings prayer is a fascinating subject. In one sense nothing could be simpler....

Deep in our hearts, all of us know that nothing is more vital to our spiritual development than prayer; that without it there cannot be fellowship with God, power for effective Christian witness, holiness of character, or any continuing divine guidance in our life. Yet most of us live in chronic apology and regret that we pray so little.

Why is it, that although we recognize the vital role of prayer, so many of us neglect it? Reasons are not far to seek. The first is natural sluggishness against which we all have to contend.... Besides this, prayer is that spiritual exercise which above all else Satan opposes. Another major detriment to regular prayer nowadays is the pitch and tempo of modern life. Our predecessors lived by the sundial and the calendar. We gadget-encircled beneficiaries of the science era live by the alarm clock. Those time-saving labor-saving wheels and wonders which were going to smooth human life into new leisure have somehow rolled twice as much to do into half the time to do it, until for millions in our crowded cities nearly all lilt and poise in life are gone! For many the usual day is a non-stop “doing the next thing next,” always to a deadline, until leisure seems a far-off foreign shore. This creates two problems in relation to habitual prayer: (1) the difficulty of finding a daily period immune from invasion, (2) the stilling of minds which have become galvanized into chronic hurry.

Well, those are some of the reasons why the path of prayer is irregularly trodden. Is there any effective counter to them? Let me mention here at least one which has had decisive value for

myself. After much dreary experience in what has been called “the barrenness of an overcrowded life,” I reached a point of self-encounter at which I deliberately compelled myself to survey my prayerless scramble objectively enough to find out once for all what was causing the dismal spiritual failure. I asked myself: What are life’s supremes? – the “first priorities” to live for? Answers soon came, and I let them burn into my thinking for the rest of my years on earth.

I asked myself: Which comes first, religious service? – or knowing God? Which has the basic importance: what I do? or what I am? Which means more, both to God and men: quantity? – or quality? Which means more to Christ: my work for Him? Or my prayerful love for Him? In Christian life and service, which is the utterly vital: ability, activity? – or inwrought holiness of character? What would my reactions be about all these, things (I asked myself) when at last I should meet my heavenly Master? Would I be meeting a Master whom I recognized by His incomparable splendor, but did not know personally (having been too busy serving)? – or would I at last be meeting face to face One whom I had for years known heart to heart?

With startling newness it became clear to me that all those “first priorities” which give richest meaning to life are dependent upon and determined by the place we give to prayer.

To others who may know “the barrenness of an overcrowded life” I recommend a similar deliberate self-confrontation. Do not say, “It is useless: I know the answers beforehand.” You do not know them dynamically until they dominate you in such a way that you conform your whole life to them. Compel your mind slowly to weigh and answer. Then relate the answers to your own life, home, business, habits. Of this I am certain: you will give at least one answer which will align you with all the greatest saints who have ever lived. You will answer that nothing can be more important to your life and wellbeing than **REGULAR PRAYER**. You will believe this, not because others have said it, but because you have seen it...

In the Bible there seem to be four levels of prayer indicated. It is (1) a necessity, (2) a duty, (3) a privilege, (4) a delight. On the first level, prayer is simply but sheerly a necessity. Without it godliness withers and the spiritual life atrophies. What air is to the lungs, or oxygen to bodily health, prayer is to our spiritual development. Even Bible knowledge becomes stale and lifeless apart from prayer, just as even a well-fed body ails and dies without fresh air.... Prayerlessness is a spiritual grave.

Prayer is seen as a moral duty. As an expression of worship it is our duty to God. As a means of intercession it is our duty to others. Then there is that third level: prayer as a transcendent privilege. It gives access to the highest of all thrones, through the costliest of all sacrifices, with the readiest of all welcomes. But the highest level is when prayer becomes our dearest delight, opening up to us a heart-to-heart communion with God which is heaven begun below...

Many of us need to bring this to a practical issue in our life. It has been truly said that for most of us the three-fold problem is that of getting (1) a quiet place, (2) a quiet time, (3) a quiet mind.

Perhaps, for some, the more disconcerting problem is to fix on a regularly available time. Let us face up to it: for most of us there will be a price to pay (let us be grateful to pay it!). At some point there will be need for self-denial; maybe our having to let go some weekly pleasure hour, or some nightly diversion, or some careless disuse of time. If we decide to make the first hour of each day our special prayer-time, it may mean going to bed an hour earlier at night, and getting up an hour earlier at morn. John Wesley is a stimulating example of watching the clock at night for the sake of that hour the next morning. Undoubtedly there are reasons why the first hour of the day has unique advantages; but it may not be a workable time in some circumstances. Each must decide according to individual necessities. If it can be early morn, it should be complemented by briefer follow-ups at noon and evening. If it cannot be till evening there should be briefer anticipations at early morn and noon. The vital thing is to fix the time or times and build the habit.

Finally, we need the quiet mind. This, to some of us, may seem the biggest difficulty of all. Oh, these non-stop minds! This up-start imagination! This memory which persistently digs things up from the subconscious at the wrong times! This seemingly incurable thought-wandering during prayer! How do we acquire the “quiet mind?” Well, this is another place where the experience of others can encourage us. Their testimony is, that the quiet mind develops with the prayer habit. Will it seem too kindergarten if I offer a few simple suggestions to those who wonder how they can fill a whole hour with prayer? or how they can cure mind-wandering?

First: this is a good usual order: (1) express worship and adoration to God; (2) then express thanksgiving for all your many blessings: see Philippians 4: 6, (3) intercede for others, whose names you have on a written list, (4) then pray for yourself, your deepest needs and longings. This order saves our prayer-times from deadly egocentricity and from interminable mere “asking”.

Second: preface your praying by briefly meditating on a passage of Scripture. For this it is good to be going through the Gospels or some Epistle – a paragraph or so a day.

Third: pray steadily through an Epistle; so many verses each day; turning every exhortation, every challenge, every promise, every warning, into a prayer for its operation in your own life. This can make your prayer-hour so rich, it will be much too short! You will begrudge every merciless tick of the clock!

Fourth: use your hymn book. Make a list of all the best prayer-hymns, and pray them. Some of them will so surprise you and draw you out in longing prayer that you will keep coming back to re-pray them. Pray till your spiritual experience is up to the level of our best hymns.

To the foregoing simple recommendations I would add just two or three more. First, let intercession for others claim a large part of your praying. Paul did (Romans 1:9, Ephesians 1:16, Philippians 1:4; Colossians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:2). Many of us would find new liberation from captivity to trial, doubt, problems, if we prayed more for others and less for ourselves. Remember Job

42:10. *“And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends”* – not for himself!

Always have one part of your prayer-period for silent listening. It is good that much of our praying should be in either outwardly or inwardly spoken words; but there is a language of the soul too deep for actual words. There is also a silence before God which speaks even more deeply – and at the same time hears God as only silence can. Remember young Samuel’s words, *“Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth”* (1 Samuel 3:9, 10). Some of us tend continually to transpose it: *“Hear, Lord, for Thy servant speaketh.”* Practice listening! Never forget that last seven-fold call of the Bible: *“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches”* (Revelation 2:3). God needs listeners as well as pleaders.

Discipler Report Back

P

I met with _____ on
_____/_____/_____ and reviewed the contents of this
lesson. My comments regarding the discipleship time
together are:

*(make comments only if they are needed to help the Pastoral
staff assist you in ministering to this person)*

Discipler's Name _____

*Please drop this off at the Hospitality Booth in the
church foyer on the first service after conducting
this session. This will help the Pastoral staff stay
current with the status of our new converts and
new members being disciplined.*

Thank You