

“Using our prayer power-source”

Romans 8:26-39 NASB

“²⁶ 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; ²⁷and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

“²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

“³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from

the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written,

“FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”

“³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Thesis: Praying to God gains us a clear channel to the greatest power in the universe.



Do you know how and when to pray?

In my conversations with godly people, none has seemed satisfied with his/her prayer life.

Most feel inadequate.

Though I always feel like a novice, my prayer-time usually becomes the best part of my day
Religious polls reveal some interesting data.

According to one poll, the percentage of people who pray exceeds those who believe in God.

Contemplate the logic of that stat.

In addition, some who say they pray never grace the doors of church buildings.

Do you suspect that many prayers resemble the prayer that follows by Peter Derosa?

"Make me fabulously rich, God, and I promise to answer lots of poor people's prayers for you."

Do you suspect, too, that a flood of prayers heads heavenward prior to every power ball drawing?

Ever joined that prayer group?

Those intense prayers rarely succeed.

Ole Kristian Hallesby asked the question that nags consciences of all of us:

"Why do most of us fail so miserably at prayer?"

Do you feel bankrupt at praying-time?

Yet godly prayers bring great gain.

"When I pray I stand on spiritual tiptoes,"
said Abraham Heschel.

"Mature prayer is an encounter with ourselves and God through which we take a deep look at ourselves and set higher goals for ourselves,"

wrote another Jewish scholar:

We agree with his statement, but he probably defined a mere fraction of what happens when we pray.

Colossians 4:2 tells three vital elements of prayer. I didn't reach these 3s by a process of artificial dissemination; they're direct from God's Word.

1. "Devote yourselves to prayer."

- **Are you fully devoted to prayer?**
- **Do you feel a clear channel to God?**

Or do you get static and interference?

Does your line feel clogged or shut-down?

Usually it's wise to avoid matters controversial.

But we must consider the next questions:

Should we schedule regular daily prayer times?

Or should prayers be spontaneous talks with God that come from our hearts?

Some think Jesus struck a fatal blow to the repetition of prayers, e.g. people who every day at 7AM say the same prayer, and then repeat it 11 times for emphasis.

"And when you pray do not keep on babbling like pagans for they think they will be heard for the many words," Matthew 6:7 NIV.

Did Jesus prohibit verbal versions of prayer wheels?



**Some folks pray face-down seven times daily.
God will judge the value of that dedication.**

We must genuinely ask how much love and concern for others we express in our prayers.

While I worked for an oil company in California, townspeople reported that one of our service station dealers could be seen going into a church building every morning at seven to pray.

But the locals also complained that the dealer often cheated his customers when he came out. God will also judge the value of that man's prayers.

Many Los Angeles Jewish neighbors walked to the synagogue morning and evening every day.

Does God prefer that we pray at regular times, or does he prefer spontaneous prayers?

We too easily pass judgment on others' religious customs.

Not all punctual prayer is hypocritical.

The Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenweig saw value in both types of prayer:

"Spontaneous prayer is a response to the need of the moment; regular prescribed prayer teaches us the need for prayer, a need we might not otherwise feel."

While in exile, the prophet Daniel prayed three times daily toward Jerusalem.¹

During some years of our Hollywood ministry, Norma worked as an office manager of an L.A. public elementary school.

Sometimes I wondered how often I should call her.

Should I call her 10-2-4 as "Dr. Pepper®" once advertised its proper drinking times?

If I had called with love and genuineness, Norma might have welcomed my three calls.

But imagine that I called at 2PM saying "I'm calling because I'm supposed to call" and then repeated the following:

Dear Norma, who is at school, I love your name. Your will be done at home as it is at the office. Lead me not into the temptation of dessert but deliver me from devil's food. Give me tonight some freshly baked bread and forgive me as you are forgiven, for yours is the house and the kids and the Jeep forever. Amen"



¹ Daniel 6:1-10

If I sincerely said this to Norma, once, maybe twice, she might be all right with it.

How do you think it would fly, if I said this three times a day, seven days a week?

On the other hand, if I called her only when I forgot my keys or lost my Bible she might wonder about our relationship.

If you voice the same prayer regularly, it would help you to try talking spontaneously with God.

If you engage in only spontaneous, at-the-moment prayers, however, you probably need to exercise some discipline and pray regularly.

The Lord appreciates both regular and spontaneous prayers.

2. "Be watchful in prayer."

How do you pray with watchfulness?

Do you keep one eye open at breakfast prayer to keep someone else from grabbing a hot biscuit before the "Amen!"?

Think of the terrible night, his enemies arrested Jesus.

Beforehand as he prayed, Jesus advised the disciples: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Instead of watching for Jesus, they all fell asleep.

Within seconds, the moment of truth came for the disciples. Soldiers came to arrest Jesus and lead him to his death.



He was prepared.

But the disciples fled to embarrassing disaster.²

I do much better on the days that I spend time confessing my sins to God and asking Him to help me deal with temptation

God gives real power when we watch in advance and pray through decisions.

Luke 6:12-16 tells how Jesus prayed before he chose his twelve Apostles.

He probably had as many as 120 prospects.

I imagine him talking to God by praying through the whole list:

"Father, I know that Ezra is a good man, but he tends to sip wine when he's under pressure."

And:

"Dear Father, James and John have good intentions, but both have temper problems and their mother is an ambitious meddler. Please help me to choose the right men."

Jesus prayerful watchfulness is likely a major reason the first century church succeeded so well.

² Matthew.26: esp. 41

Do you submit your decisions to watchful prayer?

Do you pray about jobs, major purchases, relationships, and your plans?

Do you pray for His church to grow and that all people will respond to Jesus' Good News?

"Watch and pray that you don't fall into temptation."

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful."

3. Be thankful.

To expect God's Spirit to intercede for us, we must speak and act gratefully.

As Paul counselled:

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present God your requests."³

We thank God for his care and helping us in the past.

³ Philippians 4:4-6

Too many believers have allowed themselves to be affected by politicians who make names for themselves creating dissatisfaction and complaining.

God's people distinguish themselves by their gratitude and thanksgiving.

The devil's people itch and complain.⁴

I pray that right now you will return to our text and reread it.

God has given us so much.

If we don't respond to His great love, nothing and no one in this world can help us.

Thank God for His patience.

Praise God.

He Is So Good!

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⁴ I purposely left out the first letter of ?itch.

Your personal Thankful Page

Ten Reasons I thank God today:

1

2

3

4

5

6

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8

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10

Ten people I should thank this week:

1

2

3

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