

Bible Study Outline

Prayer:

Views –

- For some it's abstract –
- For some – like eating vegetables – I know it's good for me, but...
- For some it is intimidating

Questions:

- Is prayer easy for you to do consistently? Explain why, or why not.
- Why do you think many Christians struggle with prayer?
- In your own words, what is prayer?

Prayer Defined:

- 1) **An Expression of Worship** – through the act of prayer we recognize and acknowledge God as the ultimate source for all that exists
- 2) **A primary means of communication** - that binds us together with God in intimate and reciprocal relationship
- 3) **Special speech** – directed from people to God

Charles S. Spurgeon –

“Prayer is the slender nerve that **moves** the muscles of **God's all-encompassing power.**”

- Question: Why do you think Spurgeon called prayer a “slender nerve” compared to God's power?

S.D. Gordon –

*“The greatest thing anyone can do for God and for man is to pray. It is not the only thing. But it is **the chief thing.**” ~ Quiet Talks*

- **Question:** How can prayer be something we do for God? Is this an odd statement?

Richard J. Foster-

“Prayer **catapults us onto the frontier** of the spiritual life. Of all of the Spiritual Disciplines prayer is the **most central** because it ushers us into **perpetual communion with the Father**. Meditation introduces us to the inner life, fasting is an accompanying means, study transforms our minds, but it is the Discipline of prayer that **brings us the deepest and highest work of the human spirit**. Real prayer is life creating and life changing....to pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us.... The closer we come to the heartbeat of God, the more we see our need and more we desire to be conformed to Christ.” ~ *The Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*

Prayer:

Opens the entire planet to a man's activities – puts us into direct dynamic touch with a world

One of the most amazing aspects of prayer is that it is *UNLIMITED* by day and time, location, or distance.

Key: We have to **LEARN** to pray

Question: What do you think it means to LEARN to pray? How can a person learn to pray?

The greatest aspect of learning to pray is less about the structure, and more about the opening and positioning of one’s heart to God.

Scripture: Matt 6:5-14

5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the [b]hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 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. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.*

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

For the Christian:

- The Bible illustrates that prayer is both a **gift** as well as a task
- Prayer can be spontaneous at times, and at other times take on a structural form
- Prayer is personal and based upon the Christian’s style of dialogue
- Prayer entails revealing our inner-most selves to God
- Prayer reveals God’s desires for, and to, us

In his book, *The Power of Prayer*, R.A. Torrey wrote: “Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God’s infinite grace and power. All that God is and all that God does is at the disposal of prayer. But we must use the key. Prayer can do anything God can do, and as God can do anything, prayer is omnipotent (all powerful).”

Focus Text: 1 Tim 2:1-3

*¹ First of all, then, I urge that **petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings** be made for everyone, ² for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet*

life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (CSB)

Key Point: God in His revelation to and through men, has inspired the use of specific words deliberately, and for the lifting up and education of the reader. Paul could have simply said, “pray for kings,” but he was inspired to point out four specific elements: petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings.

Petitions (supplications)

From the Greek - deēsis – (day -a-sis) - **a seeking, asking**, entreating, entreaty to God

- **Petitionary prayer** fully acknowledges the primacy of God, His position as the Creator and Ruler over the entire universe, and His
- **Petition:** A *passionate* pleading
- **Petition:** Craves, requests, desires, (seeks) an audience with God.
 - A *formal* request to a king or judge (Like a legal motion)
 - Psalm 20:1-5 (NKJV- “petitions”)

Matt: 7:7-8

*⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you. **Seek**, and you will find. Knock, and the door[a] will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

Biblical Examples of Petitions

1 Sam 1:15 Psalms 88:1-2 Psalm 130:1-2 Psalm 142:1-2

Lam 2:19 Matt 7:7-8 Phil 4:6

- We do not submit our petitions alone -- **we have an Advocate!**
- **Advocate** = Greek word meaning: “one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense

Old Testament Advocate was the High Priest of the lineage of Aaron

Heb 5:1, 4

¹“For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins... ⁴ And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.”

1 John 2:1

My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous one.

Heb 4:14-16

*¹⁴ Seeing then that **we have a great High Priest** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For **we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses**, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let*

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us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Take-aways:

- Seek an audience with God
- Assume a posture that honors God in His magnificence, glory, and power
- We must remember to bare our souls (be authentic) – speak to God in a manner comfortable to you
- Submit requests (petitions) with passion, and with the understanding that Jesus is advocating on our behalf