

## *Discipleship on Prayer*

*"A person's prayers are the measure of his Christianity, understanding of spiritual things, and experience of God."*

*--E.M. Bounds*



### **I. The Definition of a Personal Prayer Time**

A personal prayer time is when the Believer communicates with God, whether out loud or silently. At times, prayer can include listening to God. Prayer is a privilege that every true Believer has. It is an open opportunity for him to publicly or privately worship and thank God for who He is and what He has done. It's also a time for him to confess any sin in his life, as well as take any request (for himself or anyone else) before our great and powerful God. As he waits before the Lord in prayer, God may speak back to him in gentle promptings of the heart concerning some sin to confess, a request to take before Him, someone to help, something to do, or God may give him some verse or worshipful thought. He may even change the desires of this Believer's heart on some matter as he prays.

Prayer is a vital spiritual discipline that must be cultivated in the life of any Believer who expects to become mature in his faith. Jesus prayed (Luke 5:16) and He certainly told the ones He was discipling that they should always pray (Luke 18:1).



*"As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to make shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray."*

*--Martin Luther*

### **II. Key Verses on Prayer**

#### *A. Jeremiah 33:3*



*"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."*

- ◆ What does "call to Me" mean? →
- ◆ "I will answer" (how will He answer?) →
- ◆ "Show you great and mighty things" (give examples) →

B. *James 4:2-3*



*"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."*

- ◆ What does it mean to “ask amiss” (how?) →
- ◆ When you pray, how can you “spend it on your pleasures”? →

C. *James 5:16*



*"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."*

- ◆ What are typical “trespasses”? →
- ◆ Who should you confess these to? →
- ◆ “You may be healed” (How? From what?) →
- ◆ What is a “righteous man”? →
- ◆ How do your prayers “avail much”? →

D. *John 14:13-14*



*"And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."*

- ◆ What is the meaning of “asking in my name”? →
- ◆ How is the Father “glorified in the Son”? →

E. *Psalm 66:18*

*"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."*

- ◆ How do you regard iniquity in your heart? Are there any there now? →
- ◆ Why is it a serious thing to regard iniquity in your heart? →

F. *Proverbs 15:29*

*"The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."*

- ◆ Whose prayers does God hear? →
- ◆ Whose prayers does God not hear? →

G. *Colossians 4:2*

*"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving"*

- ◆ How can you “devote yourself to prayer?” →
- ◆ What does it mean to “keep alert” in your prayers? →

H. *1 Thessalonians 5:17*

*"Pray without ceasing."*

- ◆ What is the meaning of praying “without ceasing”? →

I. *Romans 8:26*

*"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*

- ◆ “Our weaknesses” (What kind? How does He help?) →
- ◆ Why don’t we know how to pray as we should? →

◆How does the Spirit make intercession for us? Why is this important? →

◆What are “groanings which cannot be uttered”? →

### III. Important Teaching for Establishing a Personal Prayer Time

The Bible is full of teaching on prayer. The following truths only serve as the beginning of what the Believer needs to understand and practice regarding prayer.

#### A. Who Can Pray?

Anyone can pray, but God only promises to answer the prayers of those who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior; those who can call God their Father.

*Matthew 6:9 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven . . ."*

*John 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."*

The only other prayer God promises to hear is the prayer of a sinner who, in faith, cries out for God to save him (Romans 10:9-10).

#### B. Why Should a Believer Pray?

→ God commands His children to pray (Jeremiah 33:3).

→ God promises to hear and answer the prayers of Believers of any age (John 15:16).

→ Prayer demonstrates our faith in Him (James 1:6-8).



#### C. When Should the Believer Pray?

→ Pray at any time throughout the day (1 Thess. 5:17).

→ It is helpful to set at least one specific time in which to pray (Psalm 5:3; 55:17). This helps develop a daily habit of prayer. Help him choose the best time in his day to devote to prayer.

Psalm 5:3

Psalm 55:17

#### D. **Where** Can the Believer Pray?

- He can pray anywhere, either publicly or privately. You can illustrate this through biblical examples of Hannah in the tabernacle, Elijah at Zarephath, Jonah in the fish, Jesus on the cross, Paul in prison, etc.
- It is also good to encourage him to pick a quiet place where he can be alone with the Lord each day. This will help keep out unwanted distractions and allow him to concentrate on talking and listening to the Lord.



#### E. **How** Should the Believer Pray?

His quiet time with the Lord each day could include:

1. **A time of Adoration or Praise**--worshipping God for who He is; His different attributes (Psalm 145:1-3; Psalm 117:1)
2. **A time of Confession**--asking God to forgive any sin (Psalm 139:23-24; 1 John 1:9)
3. **A time of Thanksgiving**--thanking God for His mighty deeds as seen in the Bible and in his own life (answers to prayer; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Psalm 95:2)
4. **A time of Supplication or Requests**--asking God to help with specific needs in his life or the lives of others (Philippians 4:6). This should also include praying for their spiritual needs and for God to bring sinners to salvation through his witnessing and the work of the church (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

\*1 Timothy 2:1 →

\*Ephesians 6:18 →

\*James 5:15 →



**BE PERSISTANT IN YOUR PRAYERS!**  
 God wants you to continue to bring your requests to Him. You can trust His wisdom to know when and how to answer your requests, but it is your job to keep praying until He answers.

*“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.” (Luke 18:1)*

#### F. **How** Does God Answer Prayer?



God promises to hear and answer prayers, but He does not always answer in the way we'd like Him to.

1. Sometimes God answers **no** (2 Cor. 12:7-9; Matthew 26:36-46).
2. Sometimes God answers **wait** (John 11:3,21,43-44; Romans 1:10-13; cf. Acts 28:16-30).
3. Sometimes God answers **yes** (1 Sam. 1:10,11,17; Acts 12:5, 12-17).

Help the child or young person make a small notebook for recording his requests and the way God answers them.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Date of Answer*</i>

*\*Be sure to have him thank God when He answers prayer!*

#### G. **What** Will Hinder Your Prayers

1. Unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18)
2. Lack of faith in God to answer prayer (James 1:5-7)
3. Praying selfishly (James 4:3)
4. An unforgiving spirit towards someone who has offended or hurt him (Matthew 6:14-15)

5. Praying in an effort to show off (Matthew 6:5-6)
6. Tiredness or not staying awake to pray when it's needed (Matthew 26:40-41)
7. Lack of persistence in praying for something (Luke 18:1)
8. Sometimes fasting should accompany earnest requests (Matt. 17:21; Mark 9:29)

#### IV. Ways to Teach About Prayer

*"The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; not those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer. I mean those people who take time and pray. They have no time. It must be taken from something else. The something else is important . . . but still less important and less pressing than prayer."*

*--S.D. Gordon*

*The greatest thing anyone can do for God and men is to pray. It is not the only thing but the chief thing."*

*--S.D. Gordon*

##### A. Through Specific Bible Lessons

1. Hannah (1 Samuel 1)
2. Daniel (Daniel 6)
3. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)
4. Big Questions about Prayer (CEF Press lesson series)
- 5.



##### B. Through Special Lessons

1. The Prayer Hand
2. God's Good Answers (CEF Press lesson)
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### C. Through Music 🎵

1. Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### D. Through Making and Using a Counseling Tool about Prayer

1. This tool can be made small enough to use with believing children and youth in one-on-one discipleship situations.
2. This tool can be made large enough to use in front of the entire class.

Teaching a child or young person to have a daily personal prayer time is one of the most important spiritual disciplines you can pass on, one which will guide him into spiritual maturity.



*“Satan dreads nothing but prayer.  
His one concern is to keep the saints from praying.  
He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work,  
prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil,  
he mocks our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.”*  
--Samuel Chadwick



**4) Pointer Finger**  
*(Pointing up to heaven)*  
 Pray for those who point me to Jesus  
 (Sunday school teacher, pastor, etc.)

**5) Tallest Finger**  
 Pray for those who are in authority (my parents, teachers, police, government leaders)

**6) Weak Finger**  
 Pray for those who are weak:  
 ✓ Spiritually (unsaved)  
 ✓ Physically (sick)

**3) Point thumb at self**  
 Pray for those close to my heart (family, best friends, etc.)

**7) Little Finger**  
 Pray for myself

**1) Praise/Thanksgiving**  
 This is the biggest part of my hand. It reminds me that my God is big and great! I want to praise Him for who He is and thank Him for all He gives me and does for me. Most of all, I want to thank Him for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ

**2) Confession of Sin**  
*(Make a fist)*  
 A fist is used to hit someone. That reminds me of different sins I still do. I must confess those sins and ask God for victory over them.