

# more to be PRAYER

*uncovering how  
to connect with God*

Where do you fall concerning your belief and practice of prayer? Do you really feel it is necessary? What motivates you the most to pray? How comfortable are you praying for someone else or aloud with someone else?

It seems that one of the most common struggles for a Christian

concerns the discipline of prayer. Many times, we just don't know how to do it effectively or sincerely. Depending on our age, life-experience, and upbringing, we may have some concept of what prayer is all about and how it should be a part of our Christian walk, but just like any other spiritual discipline, it is easy to fall into a routine that lacks meaning or a season without significant practice.

If you're like me, depending on the day, hour, and season of life, your answers will vary. The more I consider the dynamics of prayer, the more I realize that the way we feel about prayer—and the way we go about praying—has everything to do with where we are in our relationship with the Lord. As in any earthly relationship, circumstances and emotions often affect our style of communicating. Sometimes our relationships mostly consist of small talk and passing by reminders. Other times we engage in intimate heart-to-heart sharing or exchange heated words stemming from a

stressful situation. So why would we not expect to experience the same type of communication with God as we pursue a daily, personal relationship with Him?

In all relationships, communication styles and habits require a commitment of time and attention in order to succeed. We've all experienced times when we realized certain expressions or tones just weren't effective. We've had times where we've needed to offer or receive forgiveness before beginning a new dialogue. The same goes for our conversation with God. As we look to invigorate our relationship with the Lord, one of the best places to invest in is our prayer lives. What better way to do so then to consider what the Scriptures have to say and techniques from seasoned saints of prayer in order to get us going:

God gives plenty of instruction in the matter (365 verses in the NIV include the word "prayer") and gives plenty of examples of those who have bruised their knees before us, calling out in prayer to the Lord.

*how often, when, and where?*

- Matt 6:9-13 ~ **"This, then, is how you should pray:"** 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'
- 1 Thes 5:17, 2 Thes 1:11 ~ **"pray continually..."**
- Luke 6:12 ~ One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and **spent the night** praying to God.
- 1 Thessalonians 3:10 ~ **Night and day we pray most earnestly** that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.
- Luke 9:18 ~ Once when Jesus was praying in **private**
- Ephesians 6:18 ~ And pray in the Spirit **on all occasions** with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.
- Matthew 6:5-6 ~ **"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men...But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen."**
- Mark 1:35 ~ [Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place ] Very **early in the morning**, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a **solitary place**, where he prayed.

*If my  
people, who  
are called by  
my name, will  
humble  
themselves  
and pray and  
seek my face  
and turn  
from their  
wicked ways,  
then I will  
hear from  
heaven and  
will forgive  
their sin and  
will heal  
their land.*

2 Chronicles 7:14

- Ephesians 3:17-18 ~ And pray in the Spirit **on all occasions** with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be **alert** and always keep on praying for all the saints.

### *what should be the state of your heart and relationships?*

- Mark 11:25 ~ And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, **forgive** him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.
- Acts 12:5 ~ So Peter was kept in prison, but the **church was earnestly** praying to God for him.
- Psalm 17:1 ~ my prayer— it **does not rise from deceitful lips**.
- Matthew 5:44 ~ **pray** for those who persecute you,
- 1 Timothy 2:8 ~ **without anger or disputing**.
- 2 Timothy 1:3 ~ I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a **clear conscience**, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.

### *what are Biblical examples or reasons for prayer?*

- Romans 15:30 ~ I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my **struggle** by praying to God for me.
- Colossians 1:9 ~ For this reason, since the day **we heard about you**, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to **fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding**.
- Daniel 9:20 ~ While I was speaking and praying, **confessing my sin and the sin of my people**.
- Psalm 6:9 ~ The LORD has heard my cry for mercy; the LORD accepts my prayer.
- 1 Samuel 1:10 ~ In **bitterness of soul** Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD.
- Daniel 6:11 ~ Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and **asking God for help**.
- Matthew 26:41 ~ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into **temptation**. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."
- Ephesians 1:16 ~ I have not stopped **giving thanks** for you, remembering you in my prayers.
- Ephesians 1:18 ~ I pray also that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened** in order that you **may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints...**

- Philippians 1:9 ~And this is my prayer: **that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight**.
- Philippians 4:6 ~ **Do not be anxious** about anything, but in **everything**, by prayer and petition, with **thanksgiving**, present your requests to God.
- Colossians 1:10 (also 2 Thes 1:11) ~ And we pray **this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord** and may please him in every way: **bearing fruit** in every good work, **growing in the knowledge of God...**
- Ezra 10:1 ~ [The People's Confession of Sin ] While Ezra was praying and confessing, **weeping...**
- James 5:13-16 ~ [The Prayer of Faith ] Is any one of you in **trouble**? He should pray. Is anyone **happy**? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you **sick**? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord...Therefore **confess your sins** to each other and **pray for each other** so that you may be healed. **The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**
- Luke 5:33 ~ John's disciples often **fast** and pray...
- 1 Timothy 2:8 ~ I want men everywhere to **lift up holy hands** in prayer.
- Romans 8:26 ~ In the same way, the **Spirit** helps us in our **weakness**. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the **Spirit** himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.
- Mark 11:24 -- Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, **believe** that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Note: What we ask for needs to be inline with Biblical truth and an understanding of God's Sovereignty. Look at the Our Father for an example.)

### *what are the ways we can practice prayer?*

#### **Prayer Journal**

A prayer journal can be used to write out personal prayers, even noting the dates of answered prayers. If you are easily distracted praying, a prayer list is one way to keep focused during prayer time.

#### **Scripture Prayers**

Turn Scripture into a personal prayer for yourself or others by using the first narrative. The Psalms are already loaded with heartfelt thoughts that we can read aloud. Look at Psalm 23, 51, 100, 103, 139. The example below is from Phil 4:4-7:

*Lord God, help me to rejoice in you always. Your word says to Rejoice! I pray I would know the full meaning of rejoicing in you. Lord, you desire for my gentleness be*

*evident to all, and I praise you Lord for making that possible. You, Lord, are near to me. You alone keep me from being anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, enable me to come to you with thanksgiving, presenting my requests to You. I continue to pray, Lord, that the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus.*

## ACTS

This acronym takes you through each stage of prayer as you reflect on the meaning behind each letter. **Adoration** is telling the Lord what you love about Him and what you know about Him to be true. **Confession** is “fessing” up to the Lord about your sins and commit to walk away from wrong living.

**Thanksgiving** is when you give praise to the Lord for Him, His love, grace, mercy, and all the blessings in your life. And

**Supplication** is when you present your needs and desires before the Lord.

## Scala Claustrium (Ladder of Monks)

Bible teacher, Maxie Dunnam, writes about this type of prayer in “*The Workbook of Spiritual Disciplines*.” Picture a ladder with four rungs, each one reminding you to move through four steps of prayer: **Reading:** Spend time reading Scripture, especially the Gospels. **Meditation:** Spend a few minutes or more actively considering the Scripture looking for the Living Christ and consider how Scripture applies to your life. **Prayer:** This is the time to share with God what is on your heart and mind. Go through the steps of thanksgiving, confession, affirming your faith, petition, interceding for others, listening to God, and responding to His call. **Contemplation:** Sit quietly before the Lord and wait in silence to hear God speak to your heart and to permeate your total being with His truth.

## Prayerminders

- Post-it Prayers - write a note and stick it on a fridge, mirror, computer, briefcase, back door, dashboard
- Gather’ Round - pray about upcoming meetings
- Drive Defensively & Hit the Road - pray for other drivers, at accident scenes, EMT workers
- Checkout - pray for cashiers and those waiting in lines
- Wait Three Rings - let the ringing phone be your signal to pray
- Keep it Quiet - turn off the radio and TV and pray

## Books About Prayer

- *Praying God’s Word*, by Beth Moore
- *The Workbook of Living Prayer*, by Maxie Dunnam
- *Prayer*, by O. Hallesby
- *Lord, Teach Me to Pray In 28 Days*, by Kay Arthur
- *Face to Face: Praying the Scriptures for Intimate Worship*, by Kenneth Boa

## Thoughts from Others on Prayer

“There come times when I have nothing more to tell God. If I were to continue to pray in words, I would have to repeat what I have already said. At such times it is wonderful to say to God, “May I be in Thy presence, Lord? I have nothing more to say to Thee, but I do love to be in Thy presence.” ~O. Hallesby

“We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties.” ~Oswald Chambers

“Work, work, from morning until late at night. In fact, I have so much to do that I shall have to spend the first three hours in prayer.” ~ Martin Luther

“Some people pray just to pray and some people pray to know God.” - Andrew Murray

“God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer.” ~Mother Teresa

“Prayer is spiritual communication between man and God, a two-way relationship in which man should not only talk to God but also listen to Him.” - Billy Graham

“Prayer is simply the measuring device for the state of your relationship with Him.” - Anne Ortlund

“Prayer is the method God uses to provide not only our daily needs from food to shelter but also comfort, strength and guidance. The late E. Stanley Jones, missionary and preacher, wrote, “Prayer ... is the opening of a channel from my emptiness into His fullness.” ~ Abundant Living

The power of prayer is far reaching. It also holds the blessing of being in continual conversation with God, a gift too great to pass up. As we put time aside each day to intentionally invest in our relationship with the Lord through the practice of prayer, it will become a natural form of communicating with God and source of great comfort as we see Him at work in our lives. God gives us plenty instruction on the matter. Let’s heed it!

## resources

Make the most of the Life Resources at [www.moretobe.com](http://www.moretobe.com).