

Prayer ... the Enduring Fulcrum of Daily Living for Believers

A Study Outline

I. Prayer is an essential part of our daily walk with God

A. Definitions

pray (Old Testament): *na* (4994), 195 times; “I pray, now or then”

pelai (6419), 33 times; “judge, intercede, pray”

(New Testament): *proseuchomai* (4336), 42 times; “pray to God, supplicate, worship”

deomai (1189), 7 times; “beg (as binding oneself), petition”

erotao (2065), 10 times; “interrogate, request”

prayer (Old Testament): *tephillah* (8605), 75 times; “intercession, supplication”

pelai (6419), 2 times; see above

(New Testament): *proseuche* (4335), 21 times; “prayer (worship), by implication an oratory”

deesis (1162), 7 times; “petition, request, supplication”

B. Communication to God in words or in the mind's desires

1. The Spirit of God intercedes for us to make our prayers understood to the Father (Romans 8:26-27), for our words oftentimes fail to convey the reality of our inner crying.

2. They ascend to the throne of God as sweet odors or incense (Revelation 5:8).

3. We actually break through the physical-spiritual barrier, and are placed into the spirit realm.

C. Prayer is *always* associated with fasting (I Corinthians 7:5).

II. Why should we pray?

A. We need to speak to our Creator on a regular basis to confirm our intimate relationship with Him.

B. Proper prayer expands the very nature of God in us, nourishing His Spirit.

C. We have problems as human beings in the flesh that demand answers.

III. When and where should we pray?

A. Each day on a schedule wherever you are, such as evening, morning, and noon (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10)

B. Whenever and wherever the need arises throughout the day as needs, worries, and crises come up (Matthew 26:36; Acts 12:5; James 5:13)

C. Subconsciously, always be *instant* in prayer so as to be ready to cry out to God at a moment's notice; pray without ceasing (Psalm 50:14; 88:1; Luke 6:12-praying all night; Acts 12:5; Romans 12:12; Colossians 1:9; I Thessalonians 5:17).

1. *instant* (4342) = *proskartereo*, “to be earnest towards, persevere, be constantly diligent, attend assiduously all the exercises” (Romans 12:12)

2. Anna the prophetess prayed and fasted day and night (Luke 2:36-37).
3. Life to the believer becomes a day-long, life-long prayer as thoughts become captivated to obedience to God (I Corinthians 10:5).

B. Personal prayers

1. Prayer is to be private, not attracting attention to oneself.
 - a. Pray in your “closet” (II Kings 4:33; Matthew. 6:5-6).
 - b. Avoid being noticed by others; trying to be noticed is a symptom of trying to please men, not God, and severs our communication lines with God (Matthew 6:5-6).
 - c. Privacy allows a meditative attitude and limits distractions.
2. Do not use vain repetitions, to try and be heard better by Him.
 - a. He hears you the first time and knows your needs before you ask Him (Matthew 6:7-8).
 - b. A truly vain repetition: the Catholic “rosary”
 - c. True needs ought to be repeated frequently in prayer, but be always heartfelt.
3. Ask in Christ’s name and He will do it (John 14-13-15; 15:16).
4. Position in prayer
 - a. No special position is required, but a position may motivate more effective prayer.
 - b. On one’s knees; a humble position (I Kings 8:54; II Chronicles 6:13; Ezra 9:5; Psalm 95:6; Romans 14:11; Ephesians 3:14; Philippians 2:10)
 - c. Hands raised to heaven (I Kings 8:54; II Chronicles 6:13; Ezra 9:5; I Timothy 2:8)
 - d. Facing Jerusalem (I Kings 8:44,48; Psalm 5:7; Daniel 6:10)
 - e. In a natural surrounding to bring thoughts closer to God
 - f. Avoid situations that promote lethargy and distractions.

C. Group prayers

1. One person leading a group of believers
2. Several people praying individually about the same thing, in one place or scattered in different places (Acts 12:5)

IV. For what should we pray, and what makes us heard?

A. Christ’s example under severe stress before the crucifixion (Luke 22:42-44)

B. Overall focus: fear God, obey Him, and have His spiritual nature and fruits

1. *Be humble and afflicted* (Exodus 22:23-27; II Chronicles 7:13-15; Psalm 9:10; 10:17; Isaiah 66:2).
2. *Keep His commandments and laws* (Job 8:5; Psalm 34:15-17; Isaiah 59:1-2).
3. *Strive to serve -- first God and then those around you -- in your requests, not fulfilling your own pleasures or lusts* (James 4:1-3).
4. *Be truthful* (Psalm 145:18).
5. *Pray boldly and with energy* (Genesis 18:23-32; Exodus 33:12,18; Hebrews 4:14).
6. *Be confident (have faith that) God will answer the prayer* (James 1:6-7).

C. God does not hear the prayers of the wicked (Job 35:12; Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 1:24-28; 15:8,29; 28:9; Isaiah 59:2; Zechariah 7; 12-13; John 9:31).

E. Break down the subject into details when praying, as grain for the incense was finely ground before being burned in offerings as a sweet savor, symbolizing prayer (Leviticus 2:1, etc.).

F. Major subjects to address regularly:

1. *Praise God* (Matthew 6:9)
2. *His Kingdom come* (Matthew 6:10)
3. *His will be done on earth and in heaven* (Matthew 6:10)

4. *Our daily provisions* (Matthew 6:11)
 5. *He will forgive our sins as we forgive others of sins to us* (Matthew 6:12)
 6. *Keep us safe from Satan and his realm* (Matthew 6:13)
 7. *Help toward others, such as the sick* (James 5:16)
 8. *Other subjects of timely importance*
- G. Ask for our needs in spite of the fact that God already knows them intimately.

V. Answers to prayer

- A. All prayers of the righteous are answered when made according to God's will ... and the answers will come in a way that is best for us.
- B. **Answers may be entirely withheld** (Deuteronomy 1:45; 23:5; Job 30:20 and 40:12; Matthew 26:39-44).
- C. **Answers may be delayed** (Psalm 22:1-2; 80:4; Jeremiah 42:7; Luke 18:7).
- D. **Answers may be greater than requested** (I Kings 3:7-14).
- E. **Answers may be different than requested** (Deuteronomy 3:23-27; John 11-healing vs. raising of Lazarus; II Corinthians 12:8-9).

VI. Prayer has tremendous power!

- A. The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous avails much (James 5:16).
- B. The dead can be raised (II Kings 4:32-35; Acts 14:19-20).
- C. The sick can be healed (James 5:14-16).
- D. Drought can be initiated or stopped (James 5:17-18).
- E. Demons can be cast out (Matthew 17:21).
- F. Mountains can be moved (Matthew 21:21-22).
- G. People can be delivered from all sorts of predicaments (Acts 12:1-17).
- H. The power of prayer is unlimited because the person taps into the source of all power, God Himself.