

The Prevailing Power of Prayer

A Study Outline

I. Prayer goes hand-in-hand with the admonition of God to continually seek after Him (Ex. 22:23; Deut. 4:7; I Chron. 28:9; II Chron. 7:13; Job 8:5; Ps. 9:10; Isa. 55:6; Jer. 29:12; Amos 5:4; Zeph. 2:3; Zech. 13:9).

II. What is prayer?

A. It is seeking that the will of the Father be done in your life (John 6:38).

B. Pray and prayer definitions:

Old Testament

Pray = *na* (Strong 4994), an incitement or entreaty, like “ask”.

palai (Strong 6419), “to judge, to intercede or pray.”

Prayer = *tephillah* (Strong 8605), “intercession, supplication.”

siyach (Strong 7879), “a contemplation, an utterance.”

New Testament

Pray = *proseuchomai* (Strong 4336), “to pray to God, supplicate, worship.”

parakaleo (Strong 3870), “to call near, invite, invoke.”

deomai (Strong 1189), “to beg, petition.”

erotao (Strong 2065), “to interrogate, to request.”

euchomai (Strong 2172), “to wish, to pray to God.”

Prayer = *proseuche* (Strong 4335), “prayer (worship), by impl. an oratory.”

deesis (Strong 1162), “a petition.”

euche (Strong 2171) “a wish, expressed as a petition to God.”

C. Prayer is communication to, or petitioning of, God to do the will of the Father in your life. Our prayers ascend to the Father’s throne like sweet incense (Rev. 8:3-4).

D. In this communication we actually break the physical-spirit barrier, for we send our thoughts to God, who is spirit.

E. Prayer is so important that Jesus Christ stands ready always to intercede for us so the proper intent of our thoughts and words reaches the Father; Christ expedites our requests (Rom. 8:26-27).

III. How should we pray?

A. There is incredible variety in the petitions we might offer up to God, but there are certain commonalities of all prayer

1. Pray with boldness (Heb. 4:16).

2. Pour your emotions and heart into your prayers (Ex. 22:23; Deut. 4:29-31; I Tim. 2:8). You must mean what you ask or God will not hear.

3. Be selfless, considering God’s will first and the needs of others (James 4:1-4; Job 35:12-13; Rom. 12:10).

4. Believe in what you are praying about (Mark 11:24).

5. Maintain a humble attitude (Isa. 66:2; II Chron. 7:13-15; Ps. 10:7; 102:17).

6. Avoid “vain repetitions” and profuse words, such as the rosary practiced by Roman Catholics (Matt. 6:7-8; Eccl. 5:2).

7. Usually we should pray in private (Matt. 6:5-6; II Kings 4:32-35), though at times group prayer is appropriate, such as when we ask God’s blessing on food, or meet as a group.

8. Pray in Christ's name (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-26).
 9. Be patient and persistent in prayer (Luke 18:1).
 10. Pray in faith that God will answer according to His will (James 1:6; 5:15).
- B. Jesus Christ gave us a "model prayer" into which we can categorize nearly everything for which we might pray (Matt. 6:9-13).
1. Address prayer directly to our Father in heaven.
 2. Praise and hallow His name.
 3. Ask that the kingdom of God will come upon the earth.
 4. Pray that God's will shall be done in both heaven and earth.
 5. Ask for our daily sustenance to be provided.
 6. Ask for forgiveness of our own sins, and that we will be forgiving of those that sin against us.
 7. Pray for protection against Satan and his demonic world.

VI. How often and how long should we pray?

- A. There is no special formula in Scripture for how often and how long we should pray, except that we should pray on a regular basis, and whenever we have a need. That may be almost continuously at times of stress in our lives. Our prayers may be short or long, depending on the need and motivation of God's spirit within us.
1. Pray in the morning (Ps. 5:3; 88:13; 143:8; Isa. 33:2).
 2. Pray twice a day (Ps. 88:1).
 3. Pray three times a day (Ps. 55:17).
- B. We ought to always be in a prayerful attitude, wanting to be in contact with our Father in heaven, so we ought to literally "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17-18; I Chron. 16:11).

V. Under what circumstance should we pray?

- A. Give praise to God when things go well and you are joyful, and likewise pray diligently when you are down and depressed (James 5:13).
- B. Pray when you are in trouble, to ask God to arrest evil (Ps. 50:14; 55:16; 86:5-9; 145:18-19).
- C. Ask God for our personal needs (Matt. 6:11; 7:7-8; Luke 11:1-13; Philip. 4:6).
- D. Pray to cast out demons (Mark 9:28-29).
- E. Pray to gain wisdom, knowledge, and understanding (Prov. 2:1-5).
- F. Ask a blessing on the food we eat (Matt 14:19; 15:36).
- G. Pray when you are ill, and have others, especially elders, pray for you (James 5:14-16; II Kings 20:1-7).
- H. Pray for rain (James 5:17-18).
- I. We can pray for the demise of our wicked enemies, and that God will take vengeance on them (Rom. 12:19; Ps. 109).
- J. Pray for other circumstances in life: good friends, a proper mate, help for exams, assistance in finding a job, for safety on the road, dedications, for the welfare of born and unborn children, etc.

VI. What should we expect when we pray?

- A. Be sure that you can expect the Father's will to be done (Matt. 6:9-10). That will may take a form you do not anticipate, but you can be certain that GOD ANSWERS PRAYER! (Matt. 21:22; Mark 11:24).
- B. Our requests are not always answered according to our own will. Even Christ experienced such rejection, but the Father's will is always the correct answer (Matt. 26:39-44).

- C. God's answers may exceed what we ask (I Kings 3:7-14; Acts 12:15).
- D. Answers may be different than what we ask (Deut. 3:23-26; II Cor. 12:7-9).
- E. Answers may be delayed (Ps. 22:1-2; Jer. 42:7; Luke 18:6-8).
- F. If we are righteous in God's eyes our prayers will have a great effect, but the prayers of the wicked are not heard (James 5:16; John 9:31; Job 27:8-9; Ps. 34:15-22; Prov. 28:9).
- G. God knows our needs even before we ask, but yet wants us to ask for our needs (Isa. 65:24; Matt. 6:8).

VII. What are the enemies of prayer?

- A. Animosity towards one's mate (I Peter 3:7).
- B. An unforgiving attitude towards anyone (Matt. 25:23-25).
- C. A proud, selfish, and haughty attitude (Isa. 66:2).

VIII. Prayer has power!

- A. Prayer can move mountains (Matt. 17:20; 21:21).
- B. Prayer can turn the course of entire nations (Jonah 3:1-10).
- C. Prayer can heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead (Acts 14:19-20; James 5:14-15).
- D. Prayer will cause, through God's intervention, anything we might ask if we are indeed asking according to His will.