

66. PRAYER: COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it". Psalm 81:10.

Aim: To convince us of the value and effectiveness of prayer.
To receive what we need through prayer.
To pray daily in the morning.

Introduction:

"Power belongeth unto God." Psalm 62:11. God has many things for us that we can have for the asking.

"Ask, and ye shall receive" God says in Matthew 7:7,11.

The poverty and powerlessness of the average Christian is explained in James 4:2,

"Ye have not because ye ask not." This means that our asking actually has an effect on events.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16.

Prayer is one of the hardest things to do. Why? Because we don't always see instant results. It may seem like a waste of time. It is an act of FAITH, which we cannot perform in the strength of the flesh.

Definition:

Prayer is asking specific things from God and receiving them. Prayer is worship addressed to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is having two-way fellowship with God. It's not just talking **TO** God, but **WITH** God.

God promises to hear our prayers, as He promises in Psalm 102:17.

"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

Question: Why do so many Christians achieve nothing for God, never see any miracles, seem depressed, bored and get nothing out of their spiritual life?

Answer: Because they rarely pray or read the Bible.

We need to: a) see the value of daily morning prayer to ourselves and others, and
b) discipline ourselves to pray daily.

I. HOW PRAYER BENEFITS OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

Objection 1: The sceptic may ask: "Does daily prayer achieve anything?"

Answer: God says that it does and people's experience proves that it does.

If we were **really convinced** that we really received whatever we prayed for, we would pray more seriously and more often.

Objection 2: Some may say: "I'm OK, I don't need anything".

Answer : Don't you see any needs of others to pray for? Attempt some work for God, seeking to win people to Christ and teach God's Word. Then you'll have much to pray for.

What direct benefits does prayer bring us?

1. **Fullness of Joy.** "Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." John 16:24.
We get what we ask for, and we get fullness of joy. If we don't pray, we are full of self and problems. Prayer fills us with the Holy Spirit and with joy.
2. **We build ourselves and others up by prayer.**
"Building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." Jude 20.

3. Prayer brings **relief from burdens.** 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' I Peter 5:7
4. Prayer develops a **humble** and **right attitude in us.** It keeps us from becoming proud. God then **exalts us** in due time. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time." I Peter 5:6.
5. Prayer makes us **sober** and **alert** to Satan's devices.
"Be sober, be vigilant : because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour." I Peter 5:8.
6. "The **Peace of God** which passes all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus", when we fulfil the conditions of:
 - i) Be **careful** for nothing. (don't worry about anything).
 - ii) **Pray** for every need.
 - iii) **Thank** God for all his goodness. Philippians 4:6,7.
7. Prayer will **HEAL OUR LAND** from trouble (II Chronicles 7:13,14) if God's people
 - i) Humble themselves.
 - ii) Pray.
 - iii) Seek God's face.
 - iv) Turn from their wicked ways.Then God promises to:
 - i) Hear from heaven,
 - ii) Forgive our sin,
 - iii) Heal our land.
8. Prayer **summons strong angelic forces** into the spiritual battle on our side to achieve things required and to give us **victory** (Daniel 10:12-14). This prayer gave Daniel **knowledge** of the future history of Israel (Daniel 11).
Therefore, prayer gives us:
 - i) **power** in the spiritual, angelic realm, and
 - ii) knowledge as to what to do.
9. We **receive what we ask God for** in Matthew 21:18-22 if we fulfil the conditions of v.22 of:
 - i) Asking in prayer, and
 - ii) believing God's will to be done.
10. **Prayer** and **fasting** can cast powerful demons out of people. Mark 9:24-29.
11. If we draw near to God in prayer, **God will draw near to us.**
"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." James 4:8.
12. **Humility** and **exaltation.** "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will **lift you up.**" James 4:10. **Prayer** results in **humbling us** which results in **God lifting us up.**
13. Prayer relieves **affliction** and can **cure sickness.** James 5:13-15.
14. Prayer can turn the **rain off** and **on.** James 5:17,18.
15. God shows us new **great and mighty things** through prayer. Jeremiah 33:3.
16. Prayer strengthens us to **resist temptation.**
"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matthew 26:41.
17. Prayer **defeats Satan.** "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:31,32.

18. Prayer **saves any sinner**. "God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13.
"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:13.
19. Prayer **restores backsliders**. James 5:16,19,20.
20. Prayer **sends forth labourers**. Matthew 9:36-38.
21. Prayer has power to **give us WISDOM**. James 1:5.
"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.....it shall be given him."
We can have God's wisdom for every decision in life. God doesn't want us to grope in darkness **or** in our own foolishness. He greatly desires us to know His way and is willing to make it known upon our asking. Oh the joy of knowing and walking in God's ways. We can have all this for the asking.
22. Prayer **reveals our true condition** of weakness, selfishness, sinfulness and powerlessness, Eg:
i) **Isaiah** was brought face to face with God. He **saw himself** as God saw him and he cried out: "Woe is me for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips." (Isaiah 6:5). Then a life of power began for Isaiah and God sent him forth to do a mighty work for the Lord. Isaiah 6:8,9.
ii) **Moses** met God at the burning bush. He was then emptied of his former self confidence and saw his utter unfitness for the Lord's work. Then the Lord sent him out as a mighty man of power. Exodus 3:10-22. Compare this with Exodus 2:11-15.
iii) **Job**, after meeting God cried, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Then the Lord turned the captivity of Job, he received power to intercede for his friends and he bore abundant fruit. (Job 42:5,6,10,12).
iv) **David** prayed in Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God; and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts."
If we pray this to God, He will search us and reveal "SELF" to us as God sees it. This brings a consequent utter emptying of self, and room will be made for the incoming power of God.
23. Prayer has power to **cleanse our hearts from sin**, and **prevent us from sinning**. Psalm 19:12,13; I John 1:9. The Holy Spirit works in our lives in answer to our prayers. In Luke 22:40 the disciples slept when they should have prayed. Christ prayed and triumphed gloriously in his greatest hour of need. We must prepare ourselves for temptation by meeting it with prayer. Many of us are led into defeat and denial of Christ, as Peter was, by sleeping when we ought to be praying.
24. Prayer has power to **govern our tongues**. "The tongue can no man tame." James 3:8.
God can and will tame our tongue in answer to believing prayer. Pray:
"Set a watch, O Lord before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." Psalm 141:3.
25. Prayer has power to **OPEN OUR EYES** to **BEHOLD WONDROUS THINGS OUT OF GOD'S WORD**. Psalm 119:18. When we look to God to interpret the Bible in earnest, believing prayer,
- difficulties vanish,
- obscure passages become as clear as day,
- old familiar passages show new meaning.
The soul-winning man of prayer can best understand the Bible.
26. Prayer **brings** the **FILLING** and **POWER** of the **Holy Spirit into our lives to make us like Christ** and to serve Him. Proverbs 1:23.

When we turn at God's reproof in prayer, He pours out His Spirit to us and makes known His Words to us. "I bow my knees that I might be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit." Ephesians 3:14-16
"... thou would have asked him, and he would have given thee living water." John 4:10.

We have little power of the Holy Spirit in our life and service because we spend so little time in thought and in prayer. Every precious spiritual blessing is given by God in answer to true prayer.

27. Prayer has power to bring **SALVATION TO OTHERS**.

Prayer avails for the salvation of others where every other effort fails.

Paul, an enemy of the early church was saved by earnest prayer.

Many are led to Christ after some other person has been praying for them.

Prayer will bring blessing upon a church.

Prayer will settle quarrels.

Prayer will resolve misunderstandings.

Prayer will root out heresy, and

Prayer will bring revival from God.

Genuine revivals are brought down by prayer. We need people to devote themselves to

calling upon God till He visits this land with a mighty outpouring of His Holy Spirit.

Prayer will bring wisdom and power to Gospel Ministers.

Paul was a great worker for God, yet he so deeply felt the need of the prayers of God's people, that he asked for them from every church to which he wrote, except the backslidden Galatian church.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Isaiah 40:31.

True prayer takes **TIME** and **THOUGHT**, but it is the great timesaver. If we are to know the fullness of power of the Holy Spirit, we must be men and women of prayer.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all saints." Ephesians 6:18.

To pray "in the Spirit" is to pray in the name of Christ; it is to pray consistently with God's nature and will. It is **not** praying in tongues as Charismatics think about Romans 8:26,27 because these groanings cannot be uttered, yet tongues are uttered. The Holy Spirit prays with our spirit. To pray rightly is to pray as the Holy Spirit prays, to join our petitions with His petitions and our will with the Holy Spirit's will. It is to line up our will, mind and desires with the Holy Spirit's will, mind and desires.

2. WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

God commands us to pray for many things. To stop our thoughts from wandering in prayer, a list of these divine prayer requests may be made:

a) **ADORATION.**

The Lord's or Disciples' prayer should be taught to everybody from a child.

"Our Father which art in heaven

Hallowed be Thy Name

Thy Kingdom come

Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Give us day by day our daily bread

Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Matthew 6:9-15.

b) **CONFESSION.** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". I John 1:9.

Lord, I forgive those who have wronged me.

Lord, I confess my sins of _____.

c) **THANKS and PRAISE.** "In everything give thanks." I Thessalonians 5:18.

Thank you Lord for my family _____

my Church, my Pastor _____

my friends _____

for supplying my needs of food, clothing, shelter, for a free country to serve you, for the Bible, for fellow workers, for a job, health, for Your love.

d) **SUPPLICATION (humbly asking).**

a) Others Needs (Ephesians 3:14-16).

Help my spouse and I to be the best example of Christian marriage to everybody and to be greatly used to serve You. Help us to have a really great impact on this world for Christ.

1. Give Pastor _____ encouragement, wisdom and strength to guide and teach the church the best way. Hebrews 13:17,18.

Give these missionaries Pastors hearts, make them preach the gospel of Christ to many people, let them do the work of an evangelist, see many saved, many disciples and many churches started. Give them many **good**, faithful workers to help them. Keep Satan bound and out of Churches, Bible Colleges and out of all ministries. Let the Word of God have free course and be glorified. Let us and them be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.

II Thessalonians 3:1.

List the **missionaries** names:

2. **Pray for people in your church.**

3. For kings, Prime Ministers, Presidents and for all in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Prime Minister: _____,

Premier: _____, I Timothy 2:1,2.

4. For all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. I Timothy 2:4.

5. Lord "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.

I pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that you will send forth labourers into the harvest." Matthew 9:36 -38. "Here I am, send me." Isaiah 6:8.

6. Lord I pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Psalm 122:6. Even so come, Lord Jesus. Rev. 22:20.

7. I pray for those who despitefully use me and persecute me. Matthew 5:44.

b) **My Needs.**

1. Lord, I need You to give me **your wisdom to:**

- decide right in all situations.
- guide your people in right and wise decisions.
- win souls continually and bring them to church.
- defeat Satan's temptations.
- teach many Christians, so they can teach others also.
- build churches in Australia and overseas.
- study and know Your Word very well.
- visit and do soul winning.
- organise many new churches like Paul.
- be powerfully effective in prayer and understanding prayer.
- teach my wife and children to be powerful servants of God. James 1:5.

2. "The Lord God of your fathers make me 1,000 times as many as I am and bless me as you have promised me." Deuteronomy 1:11.

3. "Oh that you would bless me indeed and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou would keep me from evil that it may not grieve me. And God granted him (Jabez) that which he requested." I Chronicles 4:10.

4. Lord give me many mighty men and women as went with David and Saul. I Samuel 10:26.

"Give me a band of men and women whose hearts you have touched to fulfil **all** your will."

5. Lord, "make me a man after your own heart, who shall fulfil all your will." Acts 13:22.

6. Let us see our spiritual poverty, to stay humble all our days, and to tremble at Your Word.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit and trembles at my word." Isaiah 66:2.

7. Lord, we pray for you to revive our hearts and bring a revival to Australia:

Lord we, a) Humble ourselves now,

b) Pray to You,

c) Seek Your face,

d) Turn from our wicked ways.

Please Lord, a) Hear from heaven, b) Forgive our sin c) Heal our land.

Revive me, our church and Australia. II Chronicles 7:14.

8. Lord relieve the suffering of believers being persecuted for their faith in You. Hebrews 13:3

9. Lord, let us be:

a) Filled with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

b) Walking worthy of the Lord.

c) Be fruitful in every good work.

d) Increasing in the knowledge of God.

e) Strengthened with all might ... to all patience and long suffering with joy. Col. 1:9-12.

f) Thankful to You.

10. Lord, we pray that:

a) You would count us worthy of this calling.

- b) Fulfil all the good pleasure of your goodness.
 - c) Fulfil the work of faith with power.
 - d) The name of Christ might be glorified in us. II Thessalonians 1:11,12.
11. Lord, we pray that:
 - a) Our love may **abound** more and more in all **judgment**.
 - b) We may **approve things** that are **excellent**.
 - c) We may be **sincere** and **without offence** until the day of Christ.
 - d) We may be **filled with the fruits of righteousness**. Philippians 1:9-11.
 12. Lord, turn all Muslim, Hindu, Roman Catholic people to be truly saved by faith in Christ.
 13. Lord give us greater ability to spread your Gospel all over the world.
 14. Lord fill me with your Holy Spirit today and produce the fruit of the Spirit in me today.
 15. Judge and remove all those who preach a false Gospel.
 16. Let our church grow and our ministry win many to Christ. Give our work for you good success. Strengthen us in times of trouble. Pour out your mercy and grace upon us.
 17. Lord give us _____ souls saved this year, and _____discipled this year.
Let us see _____ Christians become soul winners this year.
 18. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10.
Keep me possessing the joy of my salvation. Let me be disciplined and efficient in my time and service to you. Don't let me put things off. Give me a field that I can fully exploit for you. Through us, raise up people who are **WHOLEHEARTED, SINGLE MINDED and with a FIGHTING SPIRIT**.

Lord teach me to praise, thank and trust you in all things. Prepare me Lord for what you have prepared for me. Make me a hard worker for you in soul winning. Make me a fisher of men.

Bring us to walk worthy of you Lord in all things. Show us successful ways of quickly starting and building churches in Australia and overseas. Keep me from making serious mistakes. Help our church to grow to 1000 in attendance.

3. WHERE TO PRAY.

- a) Everywhere.
- b) In our bedroom. Matthew 6:6.
- c) In church. "Two men went up to the Temple to pray." Luke 18:10.

4. WHEN TO PRAY.

- a) **Daily**. "Be merciful unto me for I cry unto thee **daily**." Psalm 86:3.
- b) **Evening, morning and noon**, will I pray and cry aloud and he shall hear my voice. Psalm 55:17; Daniel prayed 3 times a day. Daniel 6:10.
- c) **Morning**. "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord." Psalm 5:3.
- d) **Always**"Pray without ceasing" I Thess.5:17;"Men ought always to pray & not to faint" Luke 18:1
- e) **Mealtimes**. John 6:11.

5. DIRECTION OF PRAYER.

- a) Pray - **TO** the Father "Our Father which art in heaven."
- **IN THE NAME OF JESUS** "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." John 16:24.
- **THROUGH** the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:15,16,26,27.
- b) We pray to Jesus as Stephen did at his death.
"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts 7:59; I Corinthians 1:2.
- c) We must **not pray to Mary** or to **dead believers**. "There shall not be found among you any one that is a necromancer."(one who contacts the dead). Deuteronomy 18:11.

6. REASONS FOR PRAYER.

- a) God **commands** us to. I Timothy 2:8; I Thessalonians 5:17.
- b) **Christ's** example. I Peter 2:21-23.
- c) **Early churches'** example. Acts 2:42.
- d) It is **God's chosen method** for:
 - Defeating the devil. Luke 22:31,32.
 - Saving the sinner. Luke 18:13.
 - Restoring the backslider. James 5:16.
 - Strengthening the saint. Jude 20.
 - Sending out labourers. Matthew 9:38.
 - Curing the sick. James 5:13-15.
 - Achieving the impossible. James 5:17,18.
 - Receiving good things. Psalm 102:17.
 - Getting wisdom. James 1:5.
 - Getting peace. Philippians 4:6,7.
 - Keeping us from sin. Matthew 26:41.
 - Glorifying God's name. Revelation 5:8.
 - Revealing the will of God. Luke 11:9,10.
- e) It is our **Christian duty**.
- f) Because God **hears and answers** our prayers.
- g) Because we **gain access to God's throne**. Hebrews 4:16.
- h) **Paul's** example.
- i) We are **blessed by God and filled with His Spirit** by prayer.
- j) We **achieve much more** than by not praying.
- k) It is a **cure for depression, fear, worry and trouble**.

7. HINDRANCES TO PRAYER.

If your prayer life seems difficult, it may be because of one of these reasons. See which reasons apply to you and confess the cause to God.

- a) **Asking amiss** or wrongly to serve our selfish lusts. James 4:1-3.
- b) **Loving** the world. James 4:4.
- c) **Pride**. James 4:6; Job 35:12,13.
- d) **Unconfessed sin**. James 4:8; Proverbs 28:13; Psalms 66:18.
- e) **Not considering God's will** in your plans. James 4:13-15.
- f) **Marital discord**. I Peter 3:7. Every husband must honour his wife.
- g) **Laziness**, not bothering to ask. James 4:2.
- h) **Lack of Faith**. Not seeing the importance of prayer. Doubting if prayer will change things. Not seeing prayer as a means of being blessed. Doubt, unbelief. James 1:5,6.

- i) **Not keeping God's commandments** and not doing those things that are pleasing in God's sight. I John 3:22.
- j) **Insincerity.** Matthew 6:5; Deuteronomy 4:29.
- k) **Robbing God.** Malachi 3:8-10.
- l) **Refusing to submit to Bible teaching.** Zechariah 7:12,13; Proverbs 28:9.
- m) **Refusing to forgive** or to be forgiven. Matthew 6:12,14,15.
- n) **Refusing to help the poor and needy.** Proverbs 21:13.
- o) **Satanic activity.** God, for a short time may allow satanic interference to block the believer's prayer line, to test and to purify us. Daniel 10:10-13.
- p) **Disobedience.** Micah 3:4; Deuteronomy 3:26.
- q) **Not abiding in Christ.** John 15:7.
- r) **Sleepiness** hinders prayer. Matthew 26:40-44.
- s) **Giving up, losing heart.** Luke 18:1.
- t) **Vain repetition.** Matthew 6:7.
- u) **Praying contrary to God's will.** I John 5:14.
- v) **Wickedness** hinders prayer. Proverbs 15:8,29.

- g) Abraham's servant prayed for a bride for Isaac and found Rebekkah. Genesis 24:12-14.
- h) Elisha prayed to open his servant's eyes to see the Lord's army surrounding the city.
He saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire. II Kings 6:13-23.

Conclusion. Let us be convinced of the value of prayer and pray specifically, fervently, persistently and daily as we live and work for Jesus Christ.

8. **QUALIFICATIONS OF PRAYER.** Prayer should be:

- a) **Humble.** Psalms 10:17. "Thou hast heard the desire of the humble."
- b) **Bold.** Hebrews 4:15,16. "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy,..."
- c) **In Faith.** Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6,7. "without faith it is impossible to please him."
- d) **Sincere.** Psalm 145:18."The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him,...in truth."
- e) **Simple.** Matthew 6:7. "Use not vain repetitions."
- f) **Persistent.** Luke 18:1-7. "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."
- g) **Definite.** Psalm 27:4. Too often our prayers are so vague and indefinite, that they are meaningless, and provide no basis for divine action. eg. "Lord save that soul nearest to hell."
- h) **Biblical** and in accord with the Word of God. I John 5:14,15. "Ask any thing according to his will."

9. **EXAMPLES OF ANSWERED PRAYERS.**

We are greatly encouraged by those who persevered in prayer & received great things as a result.

- a) The apostles gave themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Acts 6:2-4.
- b) Cornelius gave money and prayed. Acts 10:1-6,31,44. An angel tells Cornelius that his prayers have been heard and that he should go to Peter to see how to be saved.
- c) The Jerusalem church prayed for God to deliver Peter from jail. Peter was released. Acts 12:5-16
- d) Israel prayed to be delivered from slavery in Egypt and God raised up Moses to deliver them. Exodus 3:1-8.
- e) Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed for God to spare Jerusalem from the Assyrian king's army.
That night the angel of the Lord went out and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Isaiah 36,37.
- f) Hannah who was barren, asked God for baby Samuel and bore 7 children. I Samuel 1:1-28.