



*Few Christians, if any, would deny the importance of prayer. Andrew Murray refers to prayer as "the very pulse of the spiritual life."<sup>1</sup> Yet, most Christians must admit that their prayer lives are lacking. Few believers understand – much less practice – biblical prayer. Sadly, prayer is talked about much and employed little.*

*Although volumes have been written about prayer, the Bible, as always, is the best teacher.*

## What Is Prayer?

A very simple definition of prayer is *communication to God*. God speaks to you through His Word and you speak to God through prayer. However, the New Testament uses several different words to describe prayer. Two different words for prayer are used in **Acts 1:14** and **Philippians 4:6**. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

① **Prayer** – This is the broadest and most common term. It especially focuses on God as the object of worship. It emphasizes personal devotion and reverence.

② **Supplication** – This is a petition or request made to God. It focuses on God as the believer's source of help.

## Why Should I Pray?

Prayer is not an option for the believer; it is mandatory. What specific command is given in **I Thessalonians 5:17**? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Prayer Life*.

⑥ What is the main benefit of the Lord's Prayer (p. 7)? How is it abused? \_\_\_\_\_

⑦ What are the three main components of prayer (p. 10)? \_\_\_\_\_

⑧ What are the two "prayer pitfalls" of Matthew 6:5-8 (p. 11)? \_\_\_\_\_

⑨ Why are both private and public prayer so important (p. 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

⑩ Check off the following verses only when you can say them from memory:

Jeremiah 33:3

Psalm 66:18

John 16:24

Philippians 4:6-7

Do you believe that you know this material well enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, review it until you do!

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

- ① \_\_\_\_\_
- ② \_\_\_\_\_
- ③ \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of Prayer:

- ❶ On whom does prayer focus (p. 2)? \_\_\_\_\_
- ❷ What three promises does Jesus make in Matthew 7:7 (p. 3)?  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ❸ What does it mean to pray "in Jesus' name"? (p. 4-5)  
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\_\_\_\_\_
- ❹ Why is it important to know the specific names of God revealed in the Bible (p. 5)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ❺ List several conditions of prayer (p. 6-7).  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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What does **1 Samuel 12:23** teach about prayerlessness?

\_\_\_\_\_

Sadly, many Christians have the same attitude toward prayer that they do toward spinach: both are good for you, but must be endured, not enjoyed. What a shame! Prayer is a privilege. In

*"We grow, we wax  
mighty, we prevail in  
private prayer."*

**C.H. Spurgeon<sup>2</sup>**

prayer you have the ear of the God of eternity. Think of it! You have the glorious honor of speaking to the One who created you and saved you. You don't *have* to pray...you *get* to pray!

Read the following verses and list some of the many benefits that are gained from biblical prayer.

**Hebrews 4:16** \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 18:1b** \_\_\_\_\_

**James 4:8a** \_\_\_\_\_

**James 5:15-16** \_\_\_\_\_

**Philippians 4:6-7** (Hint: When you pray about your burdens, God replaces your anxiety with \_\_\_\_\_.)

What three promises does Jesus give in **Matthew 7:7**? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>2</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1881), 41.

## Will God Hear My Prayer?

God is not unwilling to answer prayer. Rather, He is eager!  
What does God promise in **Jeremiah 33:3**? \_\_\_\_\_

How is God described in **II Chronicles 16:9a**? \_\_\_\_\_

Although God is eager to answer your prayers, you must come to Him on *His* grounds and conditions.

### **1** The Grounds of Prayer

God does not answer prayer because you are worthy of His attention. You have nothing that could gain your entrance into God's presence. Therefore, you come on the basis of Christ's person and work. He is God's holy Son, and on the basis of His death on the cross for your sins, you have access to the Father (**Ephesians 1:3-6**).

*"...for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies."*

***Daniel 9:18***

What instruction did Jesus give regarding prayer in **John 14:13-14** and **John 16:24**? \_\_\_\_\_

Many Christians close their prayer by saying, "In Jesus' name, Amen," without having any idea what the statement means. To pray in Jesus' name means *to pray with His authority*. In New Testament times a wealthy man who was away from home for an extended time would appoint a faithful servant as his *steward*. The steward could then carry on business *in the name* of his master – *with his master's authority*. When you pray in Jesus' name, you are in essence saying, "*Father, I know*

"God is vitally concerned that men should pray.  
God does His best work for the world through prayer."

***E. M. Bounds***

*Note: For a better understanding of biblical prayer, spend some of your Bible study time reading and meditating on some of the prayers recorded in Scripture. Here are some exemplary prayers from godly men:*

Ezra 9  
Nehemiah 9

Daniel 9  
Psalm 51

## Scripture Memory

### ***Jeremiah 33:3***

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

### ***Psalms 66:18***

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

### ***John 16:24***

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

### ***Philippians 4:6-7***

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

*By the way, don't forget to review the memory verses from previous books! Try them now and see how you do!*

## When & Where Can I Pray?

Scripture teaches that you can – and should – pray anytime, anywhere. Remember, **1 Thessalonians 5:17** commands you to “pray without ceasing.” And that “pray-on-the-go” command really is possible, for God knows your secret thoughts (**Matthew 6:6**). Therefore, you can pray silently.

Although Scripture commands *constant* prayer, it also encourages you to set aside *consistent* times devoted specifically to prayer. What do you notice about Jesus’ pattern of prayer in **Matthew 14:23** and **Matthew 26:36**? \_\_\_\_\_

What example do you see in **Mark 1:35** and **Psalms 5:3**? \_\_\_\_\_

Since Jesus, God’s perfect Son, made consistent, fervent prayer a priority in His life, how can you do less?

### Private & Public Prayer

The Bible says much about private prayer – times when you are alone with God and seeking His face (**Matthew 6:6**; **Psalms 27:8**). Yet, it also stresses the necessity of public prayer – times when groups of believers gather for joint prayer. Notice the following texts and their record of joint prayer among fellow-Christians: **Matthew 18:19-20**; **Acts 1:14**; **4:24-31**; **12:12b**.

Oftentimes Christians are hesitant about praying in front of others. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches the value of joint prayer. Work at it. Become comfortable through experience and practice. And begin at your church’s regular prayer meeting!

Prayerlessness is essentially arrogance. It is saying to God, “I have no need of You. I can make it alone.” How much better to humbly kneel before the Lord and acknowledge, “Lord, I need You. Without You, I can do nothing!”

that I have no right to be heard by you, but I come on the basis of my relationship with Your Son, Jesus Christ. Because of what He has done for me, I come to you with His authority and righteousness, in His name.” It is vital that you pray specifically in the name of Jesus.

### What is God’s Name?

It is certainly true that praying ‘in Jesus’ name’ is praying on the basis of His position and authority. Yet, it is also true that we can claim the *specific* names of God revealed throughout Scripture. Here are but a few:

Elohim, *The Great Creator* – **Genesis 1:1**

El-Roi, *The God Who Sees Me* – **Genesis 16:13**

El-Shaddai, *God Almighty* – **Genesis 17:1**

Jehovah-Jireh, *The Lord Our Provider* – **Genesis 22:14**

Jehovah-Rapha, *The Lord Our Healer* – **Exodus 15:26**

Jehovah-Nissi, *The Lord Our Banner (of Victory)* – **Exodus 17:15**

Jehovah-Mekaddishkem, *The Lord Who Sanctifies You* – **Exodus 31:13**

Jehovah-Shalom, *The Lord Our Peace* – **Judges 6:24**

Jehovah-Rohi, *The Lord Our Shepherd* – **Psalms 23:1**

Jehovah Tsidkenu, *The Lord Our Righteousness* – **Jeremiah 23:6**

Only those who have been born again by repenting of their sins and placing their faith in Jesus Christ can pray in Jesus’ name. What does Jesus say about the prayers of unsaved men in **John 9:31**? \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Peter 2:9** teaches that every Christian has been made a priest by Jesus Christ. Because of our salvation, we can go *directly* into the presence of the Father – we don’t need to go through a human priest. According to **Hebrews 4:14-16**, we need only one High Priest to gain entrance to the Father. Who is it? \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Timothy 2:5** calls Jesus the \_\_\_\_\_ between God the Father and men. The Lord Jesus Christ himself is your representative before the Father – you don’t need another!

According to **Hebrews 7:25**, what is Jesus doing on your behalf at this very moment? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ② The Conditions of Prayer

Prayer is a conditional covenant between God and His people. Read the following verses and list the conditions God places on prayer.

**Psalm 66:18** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2 Chronicles 7:14** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 5:23-24 & 1 Peter 3:7** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1 John 3:21-22** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**John 15:7** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1 John 5:14-15** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note: God's will is not a mystery – it is usually revealed in His Word. Biblical **promises** and **principles** should always guide our prayers.)*

It is essential that your prayers be consistent with Scripture. For example, you don't need to pray for God to "be with" another believer. Rather, thank Him that He has already promised to be with him (**Matthew 28:20b**). Pray *biblically!*

**Hebrews 11:6** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 21:21-22** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 9:37-38** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1 Timothy 2:1-5** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 5:44** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 13:18** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**James 1:5** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**James 5:13** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### *Prayer Pitfalls*

In Matthew 6:5-8, Christ warns against two errors of religious hypocrites. The first error is the use of prayer as a demonstration of supposed spirituality (v. 5). He teaches that prayer is a matter of private devotion, not public display. Two respected commentators of the 1800's comment on this issue:

G.Campbell Morgan writes, "*Prayer is preeminently a matter between the soul and God; certainly not to be a means of advertising self's piety.*"<sup>4</sup>

Charles Spurgeon's words are even more biting: "*It is a little short of blasphemy to make devotion an occasion for display.*"<sup>5</sup>

The second error is the use of "vain repetitions" (v. 7). Christ is here describing repetitive and thoughtless phrases which are said more out of mere habit. At best, they lack sincerity. At worst, they are superstitious. Remember that you are praying – not reciting or performing – and that your prayer is being attended to by a loving Father (v. 6, 8).

<sup>4</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, *Discipleship*. Grand Rapids (Baker Book House, 1973), 24.

<sup>5</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1881), 56.

*“And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us”*

- Prayer is dependent both upon your confession of sin and your forgiveness of others.

What warning does Jesus give in **Matthew 6:15**? \_\_\_\_\_

*“And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil”*

- Prayer should include requests for increased godliness. It asks not only for forgiveness of past sins, but also for protection from future sins.

What specific prayer did Jesus command in **Matthew 26:41** that corresponds to the closing of His model prayer?

### **CAR**

Jesus' sample prayer is indeed a model to be followed. Most notably, it demonstrates that prayer begins with worship, then moves on to requests. The following acronym to help people remember the important aspects of prayer:

**C**onfession, **A**doration, then **R**equests

Jesus mentioned several specific requests in His model prayer, but the Bible has many, many more. Read the following verses to discover more things for which you should pray.

**II Thessalonians 3:1-2** (Hint: The Apostle Paul wrote this passage during a missionary journey. What specific requests should you make to God for missionaries?) \_\_\_\_\_

**Colossians 4:3-4** \_\_\_\_\_

What does **James 1:6-7** say to those who pray in doubt rather than faith? \_\_\_\_\_

*(Some of the best demonstrations of faith are praise and thanksgiving – Philippians 4:6-7)*

**Luke 11:5-8** (also see **Romans 12:12b**) \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 18:19-20** \_\_\_\_\_

## *For What Should I Pray?*

Many people feel uncomfortable praying because they don't know how to pray. If that describes you, you are not alone. What did the disciples ask Jesus in **Luke 11:1**? \_\_\_\_\_

In **Luke 11:2-4**, Jesus answered their request with a model prayer. This prayer – often called *The Lord's Prayer* – has been memorized and repeated by countless people. However, it was intended as an *example* of prayer, not merely a prayer to be quoted. It teaches us about biblical prayer:

### *Scripted Prayers?*

“We pray without a prompter because from the heart.”

**Tertullian**<sup>3</sup>

## *“Our Father which art in heaven”*

- Prayer is based on a relationship with our Father. Those who have never become His children through faith in Jesus Christ have no basis on which to call upon Him in prayer.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *Aploget*, c. 30. Quoted by C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1881), 54.

How does Jesus describe God's willingness to answer prayer in **Matthew 7:9-11**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Prayer is addressed to God. Prayer to anyone other than God (e.g. Mary, saints or departed loved ones) is *idolatry* and is expressly forbidden in Scripture (**Exodus 20:3**; **Matthew 4:10**; **1 John 5:21**; **Revelation 19:10 & 22:9**).
- Prayer is God-centered, not man-centered.

*"hallowed be thy name"*

- Prayer is – above all else – worship. It is not rushing to God with requests, but bowing before Him in reverence. Prayers throughout Scripture are saturated with praise and thanksgiving. Requests are few and always *follow* worship. (see **Nehemiah 1:5-11** and **Luke 1:46-55**)

According to **Psalm 100:4**, how should you enter into the Lord's presence (e.g. "courts" and "gates")? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The book of Psalms is your *worship textbook*. Want to learn to worship? Study the Psalms:

❶ Praise the Lord for who He is – His character.

**Psalm 86:5, 10, 15** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Psalm 103:8** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Psalm 106:1** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

❷ Praise the Lord for what He has done – His blessings.

**Psalm 103:1-5, 10-14** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,  
as in heaven, so in earth"*

- Prayer is agreeing with *God's will*, not arguing for yours.

In **Luke 22:42**, Jesus made a request of the Father. With what words did He close His prayer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Prayer is seeking the furtherance of *God's work* and *Kingdom*.
- Prayer is motivated by *God's glory*.

What is Jesus' motivation for answering prayer, according to **John 14:13**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"Give us day by day our daily bread"*

- Prayer is dependence on God for daily provision. It is asking God to meet your needs, not your selfish desires.

What promise does Scripture make in **Philippians 4:19**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

According to **James 4:3**, what is one reason for unanswered prayer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_