

PRAYER
BASICS OF THE FAITH – OCTOBER 22, 2017 - HANDOUT

1. What is prayer?

Wayne Grudem - *Prayer is personal communication with God. Includes prayers of request for ourselves or for others (sometimes called prayers of petition or intercession), confession of sin, adoration, praise and thanksgiving, and also God communicating to us indications of His response.*

2. Why pray?

a. God expects us to

Matthew 6:5-7 *“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

b. God hears us.

Psalms 55:16-17 *But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. 17 Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.*

Proverbs 15:29 *The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.*

c. Reminder that we are totally and utterly dependent upon God

John 15:5 *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

d. Prayer is a means of grace that God has given to conform us more to the image of Christ

Luke 22:40 *And when he [Jesus] came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”*

e. Prayer works

James 5:16 *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

3. When to Pray?

a. In our closets

Matthew 6:6 *But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

b. Continually

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

This verse, then, doesn't mean that we should do nothing but pray, for the Bible expects many other things of us besides prayer, including times of rest when we could not consciously pray. But it does mean that if talking with and thinking of God can't be in the forefront of your mind, it should always be just to the side and ready to take the place of what you are concentrating on. You might think of praying without ceasing as communicating with God on one line while also taking calls on another. Even while you are talking on the other line, you never lose your awareness of the need to return your attention to the Lord. So praying without ceasing means you never really stop conversing with God; you simply have frequent interruptions. Whitney, Donald S.. Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life (pp. 81-82).

c. In Groups/Corporately

Acts 2:42 *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

Acts 4:23-25 *When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain?"*

4. How should we pray?

Matthew 6:9-13 *Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread, 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

Luke 11:5-10 *And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; 7 and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. 9 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*

Luke 11:11-13 *What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

ACTS

(A) Adoration – worship - glorifying and exalting God. Reflect on God. Praise Him for His attributes, Praise Him for Christ, etc. The more we grow in our faith, the greater priority/time this will take.

(C) Confession – “to agree with”. We are agreeing with God that we have sinned against Him in omission/commission, in thought/word/deed. We are coming to Him not in the role of Judge, but of loving Father.

(T) Thanksgiving – adoration is a focusing upon who God is, thanksgiving is a focus upon what He has done.

(S) Supplication – bringing our requests and the requests of others before God.

Father, Son & Spirit

Matthew 6:9 *Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*

Romans 1:8 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.*

Hebrews 4:14-16 *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Ephesians 2:17-18 *And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.*

Romans 8:26-27 *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

5. Prayer is a discipline

(From Donald Whitney's Disciplines for the Christian Life)

We grow in the discipline of prayer through:

1. Praying

Andrew Murray, South African minister and author of *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, wrote, "Reading a book about prayer, listening to lectures and talking about it is very good, but it won't teach you to pray. You get nothing without exercise, without practice. I might listen for a year to a professor of music playing the most beautiful music, but that won't teach me to play an instrument."

2. Meditating

Meditation is a middle sort of duty between the word and prayer, and hath respect to both. The word feedeth meditation, and meditation feedeth prayer. These duties must always go hand in hand; meditation must follow hearing and precede prayer. To hear and not to meditate is unfruitful. We may hear and hear, but it is like putting a thing into a bag with holes. . . . It is rashness to pray and not to meditate. What we take in by the word we digest by meditation and let out by prayer. These three duties must be ordered that one may not jostle out the other. Men are barren, dry, and sapless in their prayers for want of exercising themselves in holy thoughts. Thomas Manton, Puritan preacher and writer

3. Praying with others.

4. Reading about prayer