

## Luke 18:1                      HOW to PRAY

Jesus must have wanted us to know that **prayer** is very **important** – and that we must **not stop** easily! Prayer is the **breath** of the **soul**. It cannot live without it! A prayerless person is a **dead** person! Prayer is **not** simply ‘Saying the right things to the Right Person’! Prayer is really **fellowship/communion** with God!

Prayer is coming into the presence of God our Father – whom we **know** and fell ‘at **home**’ with! It is **not** like being ‘**on the carpet**’ in the Boss’ room where we are liable to be scolded! If we imagine God to be an **ogre**, then we need to question if we have met His Son Jesus who introduces us to the real God!

Shor Cat puts it like this ‘...teaches us to draw near to God with all Holy reverence and **confidence** as **children to a father** able and ready to **help** us’! The image is **not** one of **fear**, but of **hope**, **promise**, **reassurance**, of His tender love and care!

Prayer is **not** a ‘last minute panic emergency cry for help’ as a last resort to help out **in a crisis**! When all else fails, we might as well try this religious stuff! Paul must have prayed many times as a Pharisee, yet one of the first things that is said of him at his conversion was ‘Behold he **prays**’! Something must have changed!

### PLACES and POSTURES, Etc

You can pray **anywhere** at **anytime** in **any place**! You do not have to be anywhere special, like Church, or any other place in order to pray properly! Jonah was in a **whales’ belly**! Nehemiah was **servicing up wine**! **APP** You can pray effectively mowing the grass, washing the dishes, in the bath, driving the car, jogging, walking!

However, there **are** times when we **ought** to **show** by our posture the **greatness** and **majesty** of God. Although God is a Friend, a Father, a Shepherd, yet He is a Sovereign that is very **Special**. When He has done something **particularly marvellous** for us, we ought to **demonstrate** His awesome majesty. We ought to make known our appreciation and indebtedness to Him by an outward

manifestation! He **is** **worthy** of **special** attention!

If we **respect** someone, when we are in their presence we are **careful** about our **manners!** Would you approach the Queen **chewing gum?** Would you attend an **interview** for a high position **picking your nose?** Then approach God with **deserved dignity!**

True prayer has **emotion!** There cannot be real prayer in a **vacuum!** Hannah ‘poured out her soul’ [1Sam1:15] so much that Eli thought she was **drunk!** We **stand** for prayer to show **respect** – that the One we are addressing is **different** and **superior** to us! It is strongly recommended that when we are ‘flagged down’ for **speeding** we get out the car and stand before the police officer! To show our respect and **his** authority!

Paul said “*I **bow my knees** before the Father*” [Eph3:14] **APP** How often do **you** bend your knees before God? Paul **instructed** Timothy that “*men should pray **lifting up** holy hands*” [1Tim2:8]! How often do **you** lift your hands in reverence to God? Paul was not making fun when he said these things – he was deadly serious. Our God is **worthy** of **all** honour! Listen to the 24 elders in heaven as they **cast** down their **crowns** before the throne “*Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created*” [Rev 4:11]! If **they** did it – what **reason** have you **not** to?

When people met Jesus in the flesh, they **fell down** before Him? If people **saluted** and said ‘**Hail** Hitler’ to a man who **killed** millions of **innocent** people, because they thought he had some ‘power and authority’, what keeps you back from bowing down before King Jesus who **saved millions** by His own sacrificial death? Surely, surely there must be times when we, who have been saved by Him, have the **time** and the **inclination** to worship Him in such manner?

Obviously we **cannot** do this **all** the time nor **every** time we pray! The call to “*pray without ceasing*” means that we have to pray while engaged in other activities – else it has no intelligent meaning. Xns are constantly breathing prayers all day long!!

## NATURE of TRUE PRAYER

**\*Must** have **self-expression!** It is **not** a liturgical repetition from another person's words. Jesus said "After **this manner** pray..." , not 'Repeat these words'!! (Of course you **can** have proper, effective liturgical prayer). But true prayer is from **you**, no one else! It must be **you** who determines **what** to pray, and **you** that decides **how** to **express** it! Its **you** who is meeting God!

Both Matthew and Luke were present when Jesus taught them to pray – yet Luke's **version** of the prayer is different from Matthew's version! Luke uses **his own words** to describe what He heard, and Matthew uses **his own words** to describe it! **Both** under Divine inspiration – both **accurate** 100%!

**\*The heart** is important! There must a **real desire** in our prayer. Paul spoke of **groanings** in prayer! **APP** Have you ever gone to pray and you could **only groan**? You not only did not know **what** to pray for, but you did not even know **how to go about it**? All you could do is groan before God! That was real prayer! That prayer **reaches heaven!** Listen to God's Word: "...*the people of Israel groaned because of their misery...and God heard their groaning*"[Ex2:23] "*in this tent we groan longing to put on our heavenly dwelling...For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened*"[2 Cor 5:2,4] Regarding God's people in a **dilemma** "*but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words*"[Rom 8:26] The **Spirit** with **groans!!!**

**\*God** comes **first** in true prayer! "*Hallowed by Thy Name...Thy kingdom come...Thy will be done*" only **after** that do we find "*give us this day...forgive us our debts...deliver us from evil*"! We come in prayer to God, **not** with **our** wills, but to **discover** God's will – and to **submit** to it! We actually come to find the mind of X!

Hallowed by Thy **Name!** Name in Hebrew means **Character**. Eve =living; Jacob=supplanter; Moses=drawn out; Hallowed= God's character of His justice/truth/mercy is to be manifested!

**\*Prayer** is **not** like a **blank cheque-book!** A request for anything,

anytime, anywhere, in any condition! Prayer is **not** a **formula** like a slot machine, in goes the coin, wheels turn, it drives a shaft, lifts a lever, pushed a rod and out comes the chocolate bar! God is **not** a **machine** – He is a **living/conscious/moral/rational/Organism**, that **responds** and interact with other living beings! God interacts in an **ethical** way – there are always **reasons** for His response!

**\* Some Prayers Not Answered?** Of course He has **warned** us about this! *“You ask and do **not receive**, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions”*[Jam 4:3] We’ve the wrong **motive!** We want something for our **own selfish** reasons – not God’s glory! (Again we see God is not a machine! Right words for good things, but don’t get!) Also: sometimes **we don’t know** what we are really asking for (but God does, and in mercy He prevents us obtaining!) Story of woman in America re infant daughter spared – to become 1<sup>st</sup> woman murderer to death penalty). Or for **Revival** – but it requires too high a **commitment** which we are not prepared to give! *“You did **awesome things** that we did **not look for**”*[Isa 64:3]

**\*Wrestling** in prayer! *“I **will not** let You go until You **bless me**”!* Do you **wrestle** with God like that? How long do you persevere? Our text! *“will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him **day** and **night**? Will He delay long over them? I tell you He **will** give justice to them speedily”*[7,8] \*Note: Luke calls it **justice** that those who persevere in prayer should be answered! God **agrees!**

Use **arguments** to **move** God! Moses told God people would say that God was **not able** to save Israel!! Daniel said ‘This city has **Your Name** on it!’ God **can** be ‘moved’ – that is the way the Bible **presents** God to us! It says *“God **relented** (turned back) of the disaster that **He had said He would do to them**”*[Jonah 3:10]

**\*Ask** and **act!** We must do all that we can to ‘**make**’ it happen! Story of girl and brother with trap for bird who prayed he would stop trapping the bird! ‘Mum, God will answer my prayer today - I took the trap away’!! God **always** uses means to answer our prayers! Look: *“When God saw what **they did**, how they **turned from** their evil way, God **relented** of the disaster...”*[Jonah 3:10]!