

# How to Pray Like Jesus Prayed

This morning I would like to step back with you and look at the world we live in this morning. Three words come to mind – danger, uncertainty, and distraction. I say that because of the incredible avalanche of dangers reflected in the current news. On any given hour, if you listen, you will hear about events of looming global conflicts, war preparations in the Middle East with 300,000 American soldiers geared up and poised to strike, threats of long range Korean missiles heading our way, threats of biological terrorism attacks here in our homeland, pro war rallies, anti war rallies, and our volatile economy and financial climate.

All of those combine to cause us to feel danger and uncertainty, and to feel distraction, and if we are not guarded to feel discouragement! So what is the best way to live in a time of great danger, immense distraction, and constant uncertainty? I think we have the answer in a similar time, and the perfect solution that was found. Remember that time in history?

A group of 12 news reporters and 4 correspondents were sent to witness and report about the greatest events that have ever happened on Planet Earth.

They were on the ground covering everything in person, and on site 24/7 for over 3 ½ years.

Their entire time reporting was filled with dangerous travel, dangerous and life threatening confrontations with hostile armed groups, and constant uncertainties and immense distractions. Yet they summarized how they were able to operate and be absolutely calm, focused, and actually able to keep on in fruitful life and ministry.

- Their work has been recorded in a reality show format with amazing details and has been published and distributed worldwide. I have a copy of their eyewitness account with me this morning, and I hope you brought your copy. Open with me to Acts 6.4, and I want to read you a summary of how we should face our current times of danger, uncertainty, and distraction.

When we think of the apostles, those early leaders of our church, we think of an example of godly living to follow. What did they commend to us as a way of spiritual priority? Prayer and the Ministry of the Word!

Why would the priority of these who had lived and walked with Jesus Christ be prayer and the word? Of course, it was because that was the master's life priorities. He was ever in communion with God (prayer) and seeking God's will (the word). So if we seek to be like them following the master, let us start with a priority on prayer.

Hebrews 10:7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.' ”

We are examining ***The Discipline of Supplication***. All of us need to exercise ourselves in ceaseless prayer. As Jesus told His disciples in Mark 9.29, there is territory we will never enter for Him without learning the secret of Supplication, which is fasting (denying ourselves) and praying (seeking God's intervention and help in specific events and people). So this morning we need to discipline ourselves for the purpose of prayer!

1. Last time we learned how to **Exercise the Discipline of Supplication to pray all the time.**
2. Today let's **Exercise the Discipline of Supplication to Pray like Jesus taught us.**

**Exercise the Discipline of Supplication to Pray all the time.**

First, we need to I read an article in a missions newsletter once called NON-STOP PRAYER<sup>1</sup> that got me started on cultivating some fresh habits of prayer. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul says pray without ceasing. So if the Word of God says, “Pray without ceasing”, we can. Right? If you'll just start practicing this concept, you will be taking vital steps toward obeying this teaching.

Here are just a few simple habits that many of us have learned to practice. These simple methods can revolutionize the prayer life of those who find extended prayer difficult:

- READING PRAYER: Don't simply read through letters, but read and pray. After each paragraph quickly pray about what you just read.
- WATCHING PRAYER: When you watch something take place live, or on TV, immediately pray about what you are seeing. Especially do this after news programs.
- TALKING PRAYER: When you talk on the telephone, pray for the person you're talking with. If it is a believer, you can pray together on the phone. This will likely lead you to a double ministry of prayer and encouragement!
- LISTENING PRAYER: As you hear things in a meeting, on the radio, or almost anywhere - quickly lift to God in prayer what you are hearing.
- WRITING PRAYER: As you shoot off emails – send them with a touch of God requested by prayer. When you write a letter or card (which is a great ministry in itself), pray about what you are writing and, of course, for the person you are writing to.

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<sup>1</sup> These ideas were in an article by *George Verwer*, Interest Magazine, 9/91, p. 13.

Prayer is the ONLY KEY to unlock God's Provisions for us. Matthew 7:7-11 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

1. **WE MUST PRAY OR WE BECOME DISOBEDIENT.** We can only avoid sin, disobedience, and temptation by prayer.
  - Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
2. **WE MUST PRAY OR WE BECOME WEAK.** We can only experience the power God has for us as we wait upon Him, seek the fullness of His Spirit, and yield to His work through us moment by moment.
  - Mark 9:29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."
3. **WE MUST PRAY OR WE BECOME BLIND.** We can only understand and comprehend the ways of the Lord in His Word through prayer for illumination, guidance, and obedience.
  - Luke 24:45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.
4. **WE MUST PRAY OR WE BECOME FOOLISH.** We can only have wisdom when we ask of God who loves to give His wisdom and direction.
  - James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
5. **WE MUST PRAY OR WE BECOME SPIRITUALLY POOR.**

We can only lay up treasures in Heaven by prayerful life on Earth.

We can only fill our bowls of worship around God's Throne by prayerful living.

We can only stay in touch with God by prayer.

We can only stay in love with Jesus by prayer.

We can only stay in step with the Spirit by prayer.

We must discipline ourselves to prayer or we are getting poorer and poorer.

Prayerlessness leads to poverty in all that REALLY matters!

- James 4:2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

We have no idea how much wants to do in and through us UNTIL WE ASK!

What are you and I wasting by not asking?

God wants to do something we can't plan, that we can't program, that we can't calculate – so that when He does it – HE GETS ALL THE CREDIT!

- Matthew 21:22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”
- Mark 11:22-26 So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. 25 “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”
- John 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
- John 16:23 “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.
- Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
- 1 John 3:22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.
- 1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

## **The Praying Life of Christ**

So what was Christ's prayer life like? We can draw some simple truths from His life we should all be trying to imitate. We can Exercise Daily the Discipline of Prayer by following these simple habits.

1. **LIKE JESUS -- MAKE THE TIME TO PRAY.** Take time! You cannot “find time”. Prioritize the time God gives you and you will be more effective for the things eternally important.
  - Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
2. **LIKE JESUS -- CHOOSE A PLACE TO PRAY.** Set a specific place to pray, as Jesus had a “solitary place” (Mk. 1:35) and spoke of entering into an inner room or closet (Mt. 6:6). Remember Jesus had no home of His own, He always was staying with others. And remember what we learned as we traveled around the Holy Land? 95% of ALL homes ever found dating from Christ's time had 4 rooms – eating, working, storing, and sleeping rooms. Don't think for a moment that Jesus had His own room, and a quiet office to study in. He was in the midst of trailing disciples, curious onlookers, and determined roof crashing health seekers. Add to that demons and enemies and His life was difficult to say the least!
  - Have you ever done much traveling? Or lived in a dorm, on the road, or with relatives? It is precisely those times that we often “slip” in our devotional time. We say that we have no privacy, no place, no time. **THAT DESCRIBES EVERY DAY OF CHRIST'S 3 ½ years of ministry!** What was His secret? 1<sup>st</sup> He chose a **PLACE** and then He **MADE TIME**.

- Mark 1:35 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.
  - Matthew 6:6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
3. LIKE JESUS -- PRAY AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. Pray many times during the day, and at night.
- Psalm 55:17 Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice.
  - What were those news reporters' observations? Acts 6:4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."
4. LIKE JESUS -- PRAY SPECIFICALLY FOR INDIVIDUALS. When we see people we meet a prayer signal, it will truly expand our prayer life.
- Luke 22:31-32 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."
  - Nehemiah 1:11 O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." For I was the king's cupbearer.
  - Nehemiah 2:4 Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.
5. LIKE JESUS -- PRAY WITH PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE DAY. Seek out some meaningful opportunity to pray with others (note that most of the passages on prayer in Acts are group prayer situations, as Acts 13:1-2).
- Matthew 18:19 "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.
  - Acts 13:1-2 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
  - Pray with your marriage partner to start the day.
  - Pray with your children to start their day.
  - Pray in the car before you drive away.
  - Pray at the airport when departing, and at arrival.
  - Pray with THANKSGIVING when you hear good news, and with INTERCESSION when you hear bad news.
  - Pray on the phone when people call and ask for help, or share their burden.
  - Close phone calls to loved ones with a prayer.
  - Pray at meals to show thanksgiving.
1. PRAY SYSTEMATICALLY. Paul called it the 'care of the churches" (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:28). 2 Corinthians 11:28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Be organized. Use means, but depend on the Lord, not on the means.
- A prayer list or prayer book can help!

- Take advantage of time to pray during showers, shaving or putting on cosmetics, mowing the lawn, driving, walks, waiting in a dentist's office, changing oil in a car, calisthenics, and other things that allow the mind freedom to do this.
- Start a family system of Prayer each day emphasizing a different element of prayer each day of the week.