

- **The Priority of Prayer (14a)**
- **The Posture of Prayer (14b)**
- **The Process of Prayer (14c-15)**

## I. The priority of prayer (14a)

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

- A. **Paul always followed the presentation of difficult concepts with a focus on prayer.**
  1. Explaining the mystery of the gospel. (1:3-14)
  2. Understanding the mystery of the gospel. (1:15-23)
- B. **Paul always followed the presentation of difficult concepts with a focus on prayer.**
  1. Explaining the mystery of spiritual warfare. (6:10-12)
  2. Engaging in the mystery of spiritual warfare. (6:13-20)
- C. **Paul always followed the presentation of difficult concepts with a focus on prayer.**
  1. Explaining the mystery of the church. (2:1-3:13)
  2. Understanding the mystery of the church. (3:14-21)

**Application:** What priority does prayer have in your life?

**Illustration:** George Mueller<sup>1</sup>

While I was staying at Nailworth, it pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, irrespective of human instrumentality, as far as I know, the benefit of which I have not lost, though now...more than forty years have since passed away.

The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.

Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed the morning. Now I saw, that the most

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.georgemuller.org/devotional/how-george-muller-started-his-day>

important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, whilst meditation, my heart might be brought into experimental, communion with the Lord. I began therefore, to meditate on the New Testament, from the beginning, early in the morning.

The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God; searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word; not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon; but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul. The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that though I did not, as it were, give to prayer but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less to prayer.

When thus I have been for awhile making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it; but still continually keeping before me that food for my own soul is the object of meditation. The result of this is, that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation, and that my inner man almost invariably is even sensibly nourished and strengthened and that by breakfast time, with rare exceptions, I am in a peaceful if not happy state of heart. Thus also the Lord is pleased to communicate unto me that which, very soon after, I have found to become food for other believers, though it was not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word that I have myself to meditation, but for the profit of my own inner man.

The difference between my former practice and my present one is this. Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer, or almost all the time. At all events I almost invariably began with prayer... But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees, before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc.; and often after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began really to pray.

I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father, and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it!) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word.

It often now astonished me that I did not sooner see this. In no book did I ever read about it. No public ministry ever brought the matter before me. No private intercourse with a brother stirred me up to this matter. And yet now, since God has taught me this point, it is

as plain to me as anything, that the first thing the child of God has to do morning-by-morning is to obtain food for his inner man.

As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time, except we take food, and as this is one of the first things we do in the morning, so it should be with the inner man. We should take food for that, as every one must allow. Now what is the food for the inner man; not prayer, but the Word of God; and here again not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts....

I dwell so particularly on this point because of the immense spiritual profit and refreshment I am conscious of having derived from it myself, and I affectionately and solemnly beseech all my fellow-believers to ponder this matter. By the blessing of God I ascribe to this mode the help and strength which I have had from God to pass in peace through deeper trials in various ways than I had ever had before; and after having now above forty years tried this way, I can most fully, in the fear of God, commend it. How different when the soul is refreshed and made happy early in the morning, from what it is when, without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials and the temptations of the day come upon one!

### *I. The priority of prayer (14a)*

### **II. The posture of prayer (14b)**

<sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

#### **A. Prayer postures in the Bible<sup>2</sup>**

1. Abraham fell upon his face before God. (See Genesis 17:3, 17.)
2. Moses prayed with his hands outstretched. (See Exodus 9:27–29.)
3. King Solomon knelt in prayer. (See I Kings 8:54.)
4. Jesus prayed looking up into heaven. (See Mark 6:41, John 11:41, and 17:1.)

Communication with God does not require a certain physical position, but **postures do give expression to the attitudes of our hearts**. Here we will look at eight postures of prayer, discuss their symbolism, and see how they relate to the beatitudes Jesus presented in the Sermon on the Mount:

*Blessed are **the poor in spirit**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are **they that mourn**: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are **the meek**: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are **they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness**: for they shall be filled. Blessed are **the merciful**: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are **the pure in heart**: for they shall see God. Blessed are **the peacemakers**: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are **they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matthew 5:3–12).*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://iblp.org/questions/what-significance-using-different-postures-prayer>

## Lying Prostrate Before God

No position symbolizes humility better than being on our faces before God. This position of prayer demonstrates the beatitude of being poor in spirit. When Jesus described Himself, He said he was *“meek and lowly in heart”* (Matthew 11:29.)

A wise way to begin each day is to get on our faces before God and acknowledge our unworthiness, inadequacy, and inability to accomplish His will. We should ask for His mercy, trusting that His strength and goodness will sustain us throughout the day. Lying prostrate before God expresses the following attitudes:

- **It is an acknowledgement of our total unworthiness.**

When God made a covenant with Abraham, Abraham recognized his unworthiness before God and *“fell on his face”* before the Lord. (See Genesis 17:1–22.)

- **It is recognition of the need for God’s mercy.**

When the leper came to Jesus for healing, he fell on his face and begged for mercy, saying, *“Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean”* (Luke 5:12.)

- **It is a right response to a serious crisis.**

Often when the leaders of Israel faced impossible situations and knew that only God could deliver them, they fell on their faces before Him and sought His aid. (See Numbers 20:2–6 and Joshua 7:1–6.)

## Bowing Before the Lord

One who bows before God conveys an attitude of honor, gratitude, and faith, acknowledging that all things come from His hand. When Job suffered great losses, he bowed down on the ground: *“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord”* (Job 1:20–21). This position of prayer reflects the beatitude of meekness and expresses the following attitudes:

- **It is a sign of reverence.**

In some cultures, one who wants to express reverence and respect for another will bow before him. The deeper the bow, the greater the respect he shows.

- **It is an expression of worship.**

When God answered the prayer of Abraham’s servant, the man *“worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth”* (Genesis 24:52).

## Standing Before the Lord

To stand before a ruler indicates that you have a legal right to be there. It is only through the righteousness of Jesus Christ that we are able to approach God as His children: *“. . . We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”* (1 John 2:1–2).

This position of prayer reflects the beatitude of hungering and thirsting for righteousness and expresses the following attitudes:

- **It represents our position in Christ’s righteousness.**

*“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God”* (Romans 5:1–2).

- **It symbolizes our preparation for battle.**

*“Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer”*

*and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Ephesians 6:13–18).*

- **It shows readiness to serve.**

One expression that describes serving another person, especially a sovereign, is to “stand before” that person. Daniel and his companions were to serve the king after a period of preparation, “. . . *that at the end thereof they might stand before the king*” (Daniel 1:5). Since we have been “*made free from sin,*” we become “*the servants of righteousness*” (Romans 6:18).

## **Sitting Before the Lord**

In Scripture, sitting is a position of authority. When the king or rulers of a city sat in their official places, they were in a position to rule and judge and to have their judgments carried out. This prayer position reflects the beatitude of giving and receiving mercy, and it expresses the following attitudes:

- **It reminds us that all believers are seated with Christ in heaven.**

When we recognize our sinful conditions before God, repent of our sins, and believe on Jesus Christ, we are adopted by God. We are seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father. (See Ephesians 1:15–23 and 2:4–7.)

- **It represents God’s call to forgive offenders.**

Jesus told His disciples, “*If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*” (Matthew 6:14–15). The Apostle Paul wrote, “*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you*” (Ephesians 4:31–32).

## **Looking Up to Heaven**

Looking a person in the face indicates confidence and honesty. It is indicative of an open, trusting relationship. The Gospels record many instances when Jesus prayed, looking up into heaven. This position of prayer reflects the beatitude of being pure in heart and expresses the following attitudes:

- **It demonstrates where our help comes from.**

Looking up to God in prayer serves as a testimony that we are putting our hope in Him and waiting on Him for help. “*I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth*” (Psalm 121:1–2, ESV).

- **It displays confident faith.**

At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus prayed with faith and thanksgiving before He raised Lazarus from the dead: “. . . *And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou has sent me*” (John 11:41–42).

- **It indicates intimate fellowship with God.**

Jesus never sinned. He enjoyed perfect fellowship with His heavenly Father. When He prayed on the night before His crucifixion, “*these words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou has given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*” (John 17:1–2).

## **Stretching Forth the Arm**

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: “*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. . . . I will therefore that men **pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting***” (1 Timothy 2:1–4, 8).

In the Scriptures, the outstretched arm was symbolic of seeking God's mercy and blessing. This position of prayer reflects the beatitude of being a peacemaker and expresses the following attitudes:

- **It appeals to God's sovereign power.**

Before Pharaoh released the people of Israel from slavery, God sent ten plagues to the nation of Egypt. God thus demonstrated His ownership over all creation. When Pharaoh pleaded with Moses to ask God to stop the hailstorm, *"Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's"* (Exodus 9:29).

When the Israelites fought against the Amalekites in the wilderness, Moses stood on a hill overlooking the battlefield with his arms outstretched, holding the rod of God: *"It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed"* (Exodus 17:11).

- **It reflects God's redeeming work: salvation.**

Recalling God's provision for past needs renews our faith in present situations. Moses often called the people of Israel to remember the great works God.

Before Israel entered the Promised Land to conquer it, Moses encouraged them not to fear the mighty inhabitants of the land: *"Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; the great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out . . ."* (Deuteronomy 7:18–19).

- **It demonstrates worship and petitions God's blessing.**

When King Solomon dedicated the Temple to God, he sought God's blessing on it. *"Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: and he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart . . . O Lord my God, . . . hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee today: that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou has said, My name shall be there . . ."* (I Kings 8:22–23, 28–29).

## Leaping for Joy

Rather than being discouraged and defeated by trials and persecution, we are to *"rejoice, and be exceeding glad"* (Matthew 5:12). This phrase in the Greek indicates the outward action of leaping and skipping, an expression of great inward joy. This position of prayer reflects the beatitude of rejoicing in the midst of persecution and expresses the following attitudes:

- **It displays absolute confidence in God's faithfulness.**

At sporting events, loyal fans leap for joy when their team wins. The pain and strain of the game are worthwhile in light of victory. In the midst of persecution, we can leap for joy, because we know that God's triumph over evil will be the final outcome. *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal"* (II Corinthians 4:17–18).

- **It confirms that eternal things are our highest priority.**

Personal possessions, reputation, or health may be lost as a result of persecution. However, compared to the eternal rewards we gain through such suffering, these losses are less significant. Paul said, *"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"* (Romans 8:18).

## Kneeling Before God *(I adjusted the order of postures listed in the article to fit the context of the sermon.)*

When we repent of our sins, we appeal to the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness. Kneeling before the Lord is a symbol of the heart attitude we should have to make such a petition. It reflects the beatitude of mourning over sin and expresses the following attitudes:

- **It acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**  
Kneeling before God provides a visual image of submission to His authority. One day every knee will bow before God, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God. (See Philippians 2:9–11.)
- **It is a sign of earnest appeal.**  
King Solomon knelt when he asked God to bless the Temple and the people of God. (See I Kings 8:54.) Elijah knelt in earnest prayer when he asked the Lord to send rain to end Israel's drought. (See I Kings 18:41–46.)
- **It is a sign of personal humility.**

The psalmist humbled himself before the Lord and encouraged others to do the same: “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker” (Psalm 95:6).

Whatever posture you assume, prayer is an important part of your relationship with God. The Apostle Paul challenges us to be faithful in this discipline: “Be careful for nothing; but **in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7). This material is adapted from pages 24–33 of the *Anger Resolution Seminar Workbook*. Learn about the [Anger Resolution Seminar](#).

**Application:** How thoughtful is your prayer posture?

**Illustration:** Dad laying on his face in his office at church while crying out to God...

**I. The priority of prayer (14a)**

**II. The posture of prayer (14b)**

**III. The process of prayer (14c-15)**

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

**A. We pray to God the Father. (3:14)**

**B. Through God the Son. (2:13)**

**C. Empowered by God the Spirit. (2:18)**

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

**The object of prayer is God the Father!**

- This passage does not teach the universal fatherhood of God or the universal brotherhood of man.

- God is the CREATOR OF ALL THINGS. He is the source of all life. He is the ultimate example of what it means to be a father (provider, protector, leader)
  - In heaven refers to believers who have died and are now in heaven...
  - On earth refers to believers who are still living on the earth...
- Are you a child of the Devil? (John 8:39-47)

<sup>39</sup>They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, <sup>40</sup>but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>41</sup>You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup>Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup>You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup>But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup>Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup>Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

- Are you a child of God? (I John 3:10)

<sup>10</sup>By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

#### APPLICATION:

- **Does prayer have a priority in your life?(14a)**
- **Are you thoughtful about how you pray? (14b)**
- **Do you know who you are praying to? (14c-15)**