

## PRAYER

### 1. The Definition of Prayer.

- a. Prayer is:
  - (1) Speaking to Yahweh face to face, as a man speaks to his friend (Ex 33:11).
  - (2) Pouring out our soul before Yahweh (1 Sa 1:15).
- b. Quotes.
  - (1) “In prayer we come aside from all the activities of life and focus our complete attention on to the Lord. It is an act of deliberately withdrawing from everything which requires and demands our attention in order to spend time with God” (G. Rowlands).
  - (2) “[P]rayer is not so much what we say to God, as what He may want to say to us and what he may want to accomplish in us as we come before Him....” (G. Rowlands).
  - (3) “Prayer is two-way fellowship and communication with God” (H. Blackaby, *Experiencing God*, 174).
  - (4) “Prayer is relational, not transactional” (*The Prayer Course*).

### 2. The Trinity and Prayer.

- a. God’s attributes are the foundation of prayer.
  - (1) Omniscience (Mt 6:8).
  - (2) Purposefulness (Ro 8:28).
  - (3) Goodness (Mt 7:9-11; Ro 8:28).
  - (4) Righteousness (Ps 143:1).
  - (5) Justice (Lk 18:7-8).
  - (6) Loyal love (Ps 69:13).
  - (7) Faithfulness (Ps 69:13; 143:1).
- b. Prayer is to be to the Father in the name of the Son by the Holy Spirit.
  - (1) To the Father (Mt 6:9; Jn 16:23, 26-27; 17:1; Ro 8:15; Ga 4:6-7)
  - (2) In Jesus’ name (Jn 14:13-14; 16:23-24).
    - (a) “In Jesus’ name” means in view of Jesus’ person (as Messiah and Son of God) and finished work (his death, resurrection, and exaltation).
      - 1) Job offered burnt offerings as he interceded for his children’s sins (Job 1:4-5).
      - 2) Samuel cried out to Yahweh for Israel while offering a nursing lamb as a whole burnt offering to Yahweh (1 Sa 7:7-10).
      - 3) At the site of what would become the Jerusalem temple, David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to Yahweh, so that Yahweh would avert the plague from Israel (2 Sa 24:25).
    - (b) “In Jesus’ name” also means in conformity with God’s character and desire.
    - (c) The Father always hears Jesus (Jn 11:41-42).
  - (3) By the Holy Spirit.
    - (a) This means “in close personal association with” the Spirit (Eph 6:18; Jud 20).
      - 1) **Eph 6:18** 18 ...Praying at all times in the Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι), with all prayer and supplication.

- 2) **Jud 20** 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ)....
  - 3) “**89.119 ἐν**: a marker of close personal association—‘in, one with, in union with, joined closely to’” (J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 792).
- (b) The Spirit helps in our weakness, when we do not know what to pray for.
- 1) **Ro 8:26-27** 26 ...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 desire of God.
- (c) Listen to the Holy Spirit and pray as he leads and prompts (J. Millar, CCCNZ).
- c. God delights to hear and answer our prayers, provided we are in fellowship with him.
- (1) God hears our pleas and accepts our prayers (Ps 6:8-9).
  - (2) When the righteous cry for help, God hears (Ps 34:15-17).
  - (3) God attends to the voice of our prayers (Ps 66:19-20).
  - (4) God hears our pleas for mercy (Ps 116:1-2).
  - (5) The Father gives whatever we ask in Jesus’ name (Jn 15:16).

### 3. The Privilege of Prayer.

- a. We are members of a holy priesthood.
  - (1) **1 Pe 2:5** 5 ...You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood....
- b. As believer-priests, it is our privilege to approach God in prayer.
  - (1) In the Old Testament, only descendants of Aaron could approach God.
    - (a) **Heb 9:2-4** 2 ...A tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. 3 Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, 4 having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold....
    - (2) Now every believer is invited to approach God in prayer.
    - (3) We are to approach God directly, not through priests or saints.
- c. Our prayers are like golden bowls full of incense (Ps 141:2; Mal 1:11; Lk 1:10; Re 5:8).
- d. Joseph M. Scriven (d. 1886), “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

### 4. The Importance of Prayer.

- a. With Bible study, local church fellowship, and evangelism, prayer is one of the four basic practices of the Christian life.
  - (1) “Prayer is as essential to our spiritual life as breathing is to our natural life. We cannot live effectively for God without a healthy prayer life...” (G. Rowlands).
  - (2) “Personal prayer is so important that we should put it at the top of any list of priorities we may make. Its importance is such that almost every other activity should be placed beneath it in the order of the priorities...” (G. Rowlands).
  - (3) “If weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere.”

- b. Prayer is a skill we must develop.
  - (1) Both Jesus and John the Baptist taught their disciples how to pray (Lk 11:1).
  - (2) The only thing the disciples asked Jesus to teach them is to pray.

## 5. The Power of Prayer.

- a. Prayer changes the course of history. It really does make a difference (Jos 10:13-14).
  - (1) “More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.”<sup>1</sup>
  - (2) “Work as if everything depended on you, pray as if everything depended on God.”<sup>2</sup>
  - (3) “Work as if everything depended on God, pray as if everything depended on you.”<sup>3</sup>
  - (4) God is a sovereign King who graciously responds to the requests of his loyal subjects. See *God’s Sovereignty*.
- b. God invites us to ask and receive.
  - (1) Everyone who asks receives (Mt 7:7-8).
  - (2) The Father will give us whatever we ask in Jesus’ name (Jn 15:16; 16:23).
  - (3) We are to have confidence toward God, knowing he hears us in whatever we ask (1 Jn 5:14-15).
  - (4) Asking and receiving results in full joy (Jn 16:24).
- c. Prayer always precedes great moves of God.
  - (1) God rescued the Israelites out of Egypt in response to prayer (Ex 2:23-25).
  - (2) God enabled Jerusalem’s walls to be rebuilt in response to Nehemiah’s prayer (Ne 1:2-4).
  - (3) The apostles devoted themselves to prayer leading up to Pentecost (Ac 1:14).
  - (4) The early church devoted itself to prayer and expanded rapidly (Ac 2:42; 4:31).
  - (5) The church leaders at Antioch prayed together leading up to Paul’s first missionary journey (Ac 13:2-3).
  - (6) “There, Gentlemen, is the secret for God’s blessing His work here.”<sup>4</sup>

## 6. Prayer and Spiritual Warfare.

- a. “Prayer isn’t preparation for the battle, it is the battle.”<sup>5</sup>
  - (1) Israel defeated the Philistines because of Samuel’s intercessory prayer (1 Sa 7:7-10).
  - (2) Satan was not allowed to sift the disciples (pl.) as wheat because of Jesus’ prayers (Lk 22:31-32).
  - (3) Epaphras continually struggled on the Colossians’ behalf in his prayers (Col 4:12).
- b. As in modern warfare, prayer establishes “air superiority.”

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

<sup>2</sup> Attributed to Ignatius of Loyola.

<sup>3</sup> Also attributed to Ignatius of Loyola.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Spurgeon, as he showed a delegation of American pastors 400 people praying for him in the lower level of his meeting house.

<sup>5</sup> E. M. Bounds.

- (1) “The lesson from the last war that stands out clearly above all the others is that if you want to go anywhere in modern war, in the air, on the sea, on the land, you must have command of the air.”<sup>6</sup>
  - (2) “We should first get control of the air, and then work directly in combination with whatever is on land or on the water to further the main object of the campaign.”<sup>7</sup>
  - (3) “Battles are won or lost by your intercessors.”<sup>8</sup>
- c. Satan hates when we pray and will do anything to distract us from it.

## 7. The Times of Prayer.

- a. Every day (Ps 88:9).
  - (1) “I make myself accountable to God each day in prayer.”<sup>9</sup>
- b. At regular times through the day (Ac 2:42; Da 6:10, 13).
- c. Morning, noon, and evening (Ps 55:17).
- d. In the morning (Ps 5:3; 88:13; 119:147; Mk 1:35; Ac 2:15).
- e. At noon (Ac 10:9, 30).
- f. In the afternoon (Mt 14:23; Mk 6:46; Ac 3:1).
- g. At midnight, like Paul and Silas (Ac 16:25).
- h. All night, like Jesus (Lk 6:12).
  - (1) “You may need to let God wake you up in the middle of the night to pray. You may need to spend much time in prayer. Times may come when you pray into the night or even all night. Becoming a person of prayer will require a major adjustment of your life to God.”<sup>10</sup>
- i. Constantly.
  - (1) Without ceasing, like Samuel and Paul (1 Sa 7:8; 12:23; Ro 1:9-10; Col 1:9; 1 Th 5:17).
  - (2) Day and night, like Nehemiah, Heman, Anna, and Paul (Ne 1:6; Ps 88:1; Lk 2:37; 18:7; 1 Th 3:10; 1 Ti 5:5; 2 Ti 1:3).
  - (3) Continually, like Cornelius (Ac 10:2; Col 4:2).
  - (4) Constantly (Lk 18:1; Ro 12:12).
  - (5) At all times (Eph 6:18).
  - (6) “Be prepared to pray anytime, preach anytime, and die anytime.”<sup>11</sup>

## 8. The Places of Prayer.

- a. Indoors.
  - (1) In our house, with windows open toward Jerusalem, like Daniel (Da 6:10).
  - (2) In our house, gathered together with others (Ac 12:12).
  - (3) In our room, with the door shut (Mt 6:6).

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<sup>6</sup> Fleet Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., in testimony to the U.S. Congress following WWII.

<sup>7</sup> Billy Mitchell, “Statement Regarding the Necessity of the Air Service” (1921).

<sup>8</sup> EFCA Church Planting Boot Camp.

<sup>9</sup> William Yeager, *Who’s Holding the Umbrella?*, 56.

<sup>10</sup> H. T. Blackaby and C. V. King, *Experiencing God*, 258.

<sup>11</sup> Steve Strauss.

- (4) In the temple (or church) (Mt 21:13).
- (5) In prison, like Paul and Silas (Ac 16:25).
- b. Outdoors.
  - (1) On a mountain, like Jesus (Mt 14:23; Mk 6:46; Lk 6:12; 9:28).
  - (2) In a desolate place, like Jesus (Mk 1:35; 5:16).
  - (3) In a garden, like Jesus (Mt 26:39).
  - (4) By a riverside (Ac 16:13).
  - (5) On the beach (Ac 21:5).

## 9. The Postures of Prayer.

- a. With head bowed, like Moses (Ex 34:8).
- b. On our faces, like Moses, Aaron, Joshua, the elders of Israel, and Jesus (Nu 20:6; Josh 7:6; Ne 8:6; Mt 26:39; Mk 14:35).
- c. With clothes torn, like Joshua (Jos 7:6).
- d. With dust on our heads, like Joshua and the elders of Israel (Jos 7:6).
- e. With tears, like Hannah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Jesus (1 Sa 1:10; Ezr 10:1; Ne 1:4; Heb 5:7).
- f. Speaking in our heart, like Hannah (1 Sa 1:13).
- g. Sitting, like David and Nehemiah (1 Ch 17:16; Ne 1:4).
- h. Standing, like Solomon (1 Ki 8:22; 2 Ch 6:12; Ne 9:5; Mk 11:25; Lk 18:13).
- i. On our knees, like Solomon, Daniel, Ezra, Jesus, Peter, and Paul (1 Ki 8:54; 2 Ch 6:13; Ezr 9:5; Ps 63:4; Da 6:10; Lk 22:41; Ac 9:40; 20:36; 21:5; Eph 3:14).
- j. With hands spread out toward heaven, like Solomon and Ezra (1 Ki 8:22, 54; 2 Ch 6:12-13; Ezr 9:5; Ne 9:5; Ps 63:4; Mk 11:25; Lk 18:13; 1 Ti 2:8).
- k. With windows open toward Jerusalem, like Daniel (Da 6:10).
- l. With face turned to Yahweh, like Daniel and Jesus (Da 9:3; Jn 17:1).
- m. With fasting, like Daniel and Nehemiah (Da 9:3; Ne 1:4).
- n. In sackcloth and ashes, like Daniel (Da 9:3).
- o. While singing hymns, like Paul and Silas (Ac 16:25).
- p. With loud cries, like Jesus (Heb 5:7).

## 10. The Attitude of Prayer.

- a. Humility, reverence (2 Ch 7:14; Da 10:12; Heb 5:7).
- b. Holiness, clarity of conscience, righteousness (1 Ti 2:8; 2 Ti 1:3; Jas 5:16; 1 Jn 3:21-22).
- c. Thanksgiving (Ps 100:4; Da 6:10; Eph 1:16; Php 1:3-4; 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Th 5:16-18; 2 Ti 1:3).
- d. Joy (Php 1:3-4; 1 Th 5:16-18).
- e. Peacefulness (1 Ti 2:8).
- f. Faith, confidence, courage (1 Ch 17:25; Mt 21:22; Mk 11:22-24; Jn 11:22; 14:13-14; 15:7; Heb 4:16; 11:6; Jas 1:6-8; 1 Jn 3:21; 5:14-15).
- g. Patience (Ps 40:1).
  - (1) “David frequently advocated the practice of ‘waiting upon the Lord.’ This immediately implies that we should not rush into or out of God’s presence, but rather that we should allocate sufficient time to wait patiently before Him. The concept of waiting also implies the idea of a servant or a waiter, who waits

patiently and humbly on his Master. He stands by patiently awaiting a moment appropriate to his Master when He may choose to convey His wishes and desires” (G. Rowlands).

- (2) “It is not really so important what I tell God. What is far more important is WHAT HE TELLS ME. Therefore when you approach the place and time of prayer come with the understanding that you need to do more than merely talk with God, you must allow the time to wait on Him, listen to Him, and hear what He has to say to you” (G. Rowlands).
  - (3) “[A]s a general rule the exercise of prayer requires time and should not be hurried” (G. Rowlands).
- h. Perseverance, struggling (Lk 18:1-7; Eph 6:18; Col 4:2, 12).
- (1) “The obvious ideal is to pray until an answer is received or until you have the assurance of the Lord that it is accomplished in the spiritual realm. How? By continual prayer until the Lord gives you a peace about the situation. Once you feel this peace, then it is good to begin to praise the Lord. Praise brings the victory, so give Him praise and thanksgiving for the victory that has been gained” (G. Rowlands).
  - (2) Pray until you reach the tipping point, until the first domino falls.
- i. Earnestness, fervour, sober-mindedness (Ac 12:5; 1 Th 3:10; Jas 5:17).
- j. Alertness, concentration, watchfulness (Eph 6:18; Col 4:2).
- (1) “After you pray, the greatest single thing you need one do is to turn on your spiritual concentration. ... When I pray, I immediately begin to watch for what happens next.”<sup>12</sup>

## 11. The Structure of Prayer.

- a. Three acronyms to remember are:
  - (1) ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.
  - (2) PCIP: Praise, Confession, Intercession, Petition.
  - (3) PRAY: Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield
- b. According to *The Online Book of Common Prayer* (<https://www.bcponline.org>):
  - (1) “The principal kinds of prayer are adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition.”
  - (2) “Adoration is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God’s presence.”
  - (3) “We praise God, not to obtain anything, but because God’s Being draws praise from us.”
  - (4) “Thanksgiving is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.”
  - (5) “In penitence, we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with the intention to amend our lives.”
  - (6) “Oblation is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labours, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God.”
  - (7) “Intercession brings before God the needs of others; in petition, we present our own needs, that God's will may be done.”

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<sup>12</sup> H. Blackaby, *Experiencing God*, 180-81.

- c. The Lord's prayer (Mt 6:9-13) has these components intermixed.
  - (1) Praise.
    - (a) **Mt 6:9** 9 Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
  - (2) Confession.
    - (a) **Mt 6:12** 12 ...Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
  - (3) Intercession.
    - (a) **Mt 6:10** 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
  - (4) Petition.
    - (a) **Mt 6:11** 11 Give us this day our daily bread....
    - (b) **Mt 6:13** 13 ...Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

## 12. Step One: Praise.

- a. Start by recognising God is God. Focus on the bigness of God before you get to the small stuff. Look through the telescope before you look through the microscope.
- b. Prayer is primarily about intimacy and presence. God is inviting us to enjoy him. Thus we are to be still and wait patiently for him (Ps 37:7).
- c. Biblical examples:
  - (1) Hannah (1 Sa 2:1).
  - (2) Nehemiah (Ne 1:5).
  - (3) Mary (Lk 1:46-55).
  - (4) Jesus (Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2).
  - (5) First believers (Ac 4:24-28).
- d. Tips:
  - (1) Be still and breathe deeply.
  - (2) Start your prayer time by reading out a Psalm.
  - (3) Compile verses on God's attributes and use them to praise God.
  - (4) Come into his presence with singing (Ps 100:2).

## 13. Step Two: Confession.

- a. God won't listen to our prayers if we:
  - (1) Rebel against his command (Dt 1:43-45).
  - (2) Cherish iniquity in our heart (Ps 66:18; Pr 15:8, 29; Is 1:13; 59:1-2).
  - (3) Stop listening to him (Pr 1:24-28; 28:9).
  - (4) Close our ear to the cry of the poor (Pr 21:13).
  - (5) Take idols into our hearts (Eze 14:3).
  - (6) Refuse to forgive others (Mt 6:15).
  - (7) Ask wrongly to spend on our passions (Jas 4:3).
- b. God will listen to our prayers if we:
  - (1) Repent with our heart and soul (2 Ch 6:38-39).
  - (2) Humble ourselves, seek God's face, and turn from our wicked ways (2 Ch 7:14).
  - (3) Abide in Jesus and allow his words to abide in us (Jn 15:7).
  - (4) Confess our sins (Ne 1:6; Da 9:4; 1 Jn 1:9).
  - (5) Forgive our debtors (Mt 6:12; 11:25; Lk 11:4).
    - (a) "Don't let pride keep you from experiencing a right relationship with the Lord. Forgive the person who has wronged you, no matter how hurtful the offence may have been. You will then experience a release in your spirit and your fellowship with the Lord will be restored" (G. Rowlands).

- (6) Draw near to him, cleanse our hands, and purify our hearts (Jas 4:8).

#### 14. Step Three: Intercession.

- a. We are to remember Jesus and the Holy Spirit are interceding for us.
- (1) Jesus (Ro 8:34; Heb 7:25).
  - (2) Holy Spirit (Ro 8:26-27).
- b. We are to pray:
- (1) For God's kingdom to come (Mt 6:10).
    - (a) For God's desire to be done on earth (Mt 6:10).
  - (2) For disciples (Jn 17:9; Ro 15:30; 2 Co 1:11).
    - (a) That the Lord of the harvest would send out labourers into his harvest (Mt 9:38).
    - (b) That Satan wouldn't be allowed to sift them like wheat (Lk 22:31).
    - (c) That their faith would not fail (Lk 22:31).
    - (d) That the Father would keep them in his name (Jn 17:11).
    - (e) That they would be one (Jn 17:11).
    - (f) That they would be set apart in the truth, God's word (Jn 17:17).
    - (g) That words would be given to them to boldly proclaim the gospel (Eph 6:19-20).
    - (h) That God would open to them a door for the word, to declare Jesus (Col 4:3).
    - (i) That they would make the gospel clear (Col 4:4).
    - (j) That the word of the Lord would speed ahead and be honoured (2 Th 3:1).
    - (k) See Will Bruce, "Pastors Need Prayer Too," (OMF International, 1997).
  - (3) For believers (Jn 17:20; Eph 6:18).
    - (a) That God would open their eyes to see (2 Ki 6:17).
    - (b) That they would have strength to escape God's judgment and stand before Jesus (Lk 21:36).
    - (c) That they would be perfectly one (Jn 17:21, 23).
    - (d) That they would be in the Father and in the Son (Jn 17:21).
    - (e) That God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him (Eph 1:17).
    - (f) That the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened (Eph 1:18).
    - (g) That they would know the hope to which God has called them (Eph 1:18).
    - (h) That they would know the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints (Eph 1:18).
    - (i) That they would know the immeasurable greatness of God's power toward us (Eph 1:19).
    - (j) That they would be strengthened with power through God's Spirit (Eph 3:16).
    - (k) That Jesus would dwell in their hearts through faith (Eph 3:17).
    - (l) That they would be rooted and grounded in love (Eph 3:17).
    - (m) That they would have strength to comprehend what is the breadth, length, height, and depth of God's love (Eph 3:18).
    - (n) That they would know the love of Jesus that surpasses knowledge (Eph 3:19).
    - (o) That they would be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph 3:19).
    - (p) That their love would abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment (Php 1:9).

- (q) That they would approve what is excellent (Php 1:10).
- (r) That they would be pure and blameless for the day of Messiah (Php 1:10).
- (s) That they would be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus (Php 1:11).
- (t) That they would be filled with the knowledge of God's desire in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (Col 1:9).
- (u) That they would walk in a manner worthy of Jesus, fully pleasing to him (Col 1:10).
- (v) That they would produce fruit in every good work (Col 1:10).
- (w) That they would increase in the knowledge of God (Col 1:10).
- (x) That they would be strengthened with all power for all endurance and patience with joy (Col 1:11).
- (y) That they would give thanks to the Father (Col 1:12).
- (z) That they would stand mature and fully assured in all the desire of God (Col 4:12).
- (aa) That Jesus would make them increase and abound in love for one another and for all (1 Th 3:12).
- (bb) That Jesus would establish their hearts blameless in holiness before the Father at Jesus' coming (1 Th 3:13).
- (cc) That God would make them worthy of his calling (2 Th 1:11).
- (dd) That God would fulfil their resolve for good (2 Th 1:11).
- (ee) That God would fulfil their work of faith by his power (2 Th 1:11).
- (4) For persecuted believers (Ac 12:5).
- (5) For believers under divine discipline (Ex 32:11).
- (6) For all people and unbelievers (1 Ti 2:1, 3).
  - (a) That God would make himself known he is God (1 Ki 18:36).
  - (b) That God would make know that we are his servants (1 Ki 18:36).
  - (c) That God would make know we do all things at his word (1 KI 18:36).
  - (d) That they would know Yahweh, the God of Israel, is God (1 Ki 18:37).
  - (e) That they would know God has turned their hearts back (1 Ki 18:37).
  - (f) That they would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Ti 2:4).
  - (g) "Ouranius is a holy priest, full of the spirit of the Gospel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor country village. Every soul in it is as dear to him as himself; and he loves them all as he love himself, because he prays for them all as often as he prays for himself. If his whole life is one continual exercise of great zeal and labor..., it is because he has learned the great value of souls, by so often appearing before God as an intercessor for them."<sup>13</sup>
  - (h) "...[H]e that daily prays to God that all men may be happy in Heaven, takes the likeliest way to make him wish for and delight in their happiness on earth."<sup>14</sup>
  - (i) "...[A] frequent intercession with God, earnestly beseeching Him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with His providence, enlighten them

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<sup>13</sup> William Law, *A Serious Call*.

<sup>14</sup> William Law, *A Serious Call*, 262.

with His Spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in.”<sup>15</sup>

- (7) For ill unbelievers to be healed (Ac 28:8).
- (8) For those in high positions in government (1 Ti 2:2)
  - (a) That we may lead a peaceful, quiet, godly, and dignified life (1 Ti 2:2).
- (9) For Israel (Is 12:23).
  - (a) That she would be saved from her enemies (1 Sa 7:8).
  - (b) For the remnant of Israel (Ne 1:2-4).
  - (c) For the peace and security of Jerusalem (Ps 122:6-7; Ne 1:2-4).
  - (d) That many Jewish people would be saved (Ro 10:1).
- (10) For those who persecute us (Mt 5:44).
- c. Intercession is the best way to discover the true state of our own hearts.
  - (1) “[I]ntercession is not only the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best cure and preservative against all unkind tempers, all angry and haughty passions, but is also of great use to discover to us the true state of our own hearts.”<sup>16</sup>
- d. Make yourself available to receive prayer burdens from the Spirit.
  - (1) “To intercede, you make yourself available to receive a prayer burden from the Lord. It is a holy trust when the Lord reveals His secrets to you in this way. It must not be taken lightly, and you must show yourself worthy of this trust. When you feel that the Holy Spirit is moving in your heart concerning a situation He reveals, be obedient to cry out to God about the situation that the Spirit brings to your mind. Sometimes He directs us to intercede for spiritual leaders who are under attack, missionaries in heathen countries, people in danger or who are desperately ill. Many times one knows nothing of the circumstances of these being interceded for, apart from a directive of the Holy Spirit. How do you know who to pray for? One way to begin is to ask: “Lord, what is on YOUR heart? Which is the most important situation? You may wonder how you will know if the Holy Spirit is calling you to pray. The Holy Spirit will indicate by words, messages or thoughts that stir your spirit. Maybe He will bring to your mind a face, a name, family, a Church, a Nation etc., as pictures in your imagination. Intercession starts and ends with God. After He gives you a subject to pray over, you should pray until you feel He wants you to move on to the next situation” (G. Rowlands).
- e. Tips.
  - (1) Inform yourself on issues and people you intercede for. Ask lots of questions so you can pray specifically.
  - (2) If you’re praying for something big, pray incrementally, one step at a time.
  - (3) Pray through the headlines of your local newspaper.
  - (4) Use an app like Echo Prayer, PrayerMate, or Prayer Notes: Ask, Seek, Knock.

## 15. Prayer Step Four: Petition.

- a. Principles.

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<sup>15</sup> William Law, *A Serious Call*, 262.

<sup>16</sup> William Law, *A Serious Call*, 265.

- (1) The Father invites us to ask (1 Ki 3:5; Mt 7:7-8; Php 4:6; 1 Jn 5:15).
  - (2) Jesus, too, invites us to ask (Jn 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:23-24).
  - (3) The Father knows what we need, but he still wants us to ask (Mt 6:8). Jesus, too (Mt 20:32).
  - (4) We may ask for things we want, not just things we need (1 Ch 4:10).
  - (5) If we don't ask, we won't receive (Jas 4:2).
- b. Authorised petitions include:
- (1) For success in our tasks (Ge 24:12).
  - (2) For God to show us his ways (Ex 33:13).
  - (3) To know God and find favour in his sight (Ex 33:13).
  - (4) For God's presence to go with us (Ex 33:14-15).
  - (5) For it to be known we have found favour in God's sight (Ex 33:16).
  - (6) For it to be known we are distinct from other people on earth (Ex 33:16).
  - (7) For children (1 Sa 4:11).
  - (8) For a wise and discerning heart (חָכְמָה) (1 Ki 3:9, 12).
  - (9) To discern between good and evil (1 Ki 3:9, 11).
  - (10) For blessing (1 Ch 4:10).
  - (11) That God would enlarge our border (1 Ch 4:10).
  - (12) That God's hand would be with us (1 Ch 4:10).
  - (13) That God would keep us from harm (1 Ch 4:10).
  - (14) For favour with government officials (Ne 2:4-5).
  - (15) For our daily bread (Mt 6:11; Lk 11:3).
  - (16) Not to be led into temptation (Mt 6:13; Lk 11:14).
  - (17) To be delivered from the evil one (Mt 6:13).
  - (18) For wisdom (Jas 1:5).
  - (19) For spiritual and physical healing (Jas 5:14-16).
- c. Unauthorised petitions include:
- (1) For a long life (1 K 3:11).
  - (2) For riches (1 Ki 3:11).
  - (3) For the life of our enemies (1 Ki 3:11).
  - (4) For things to spend on our evil pleasures (ἡδονή) (Jas 4:3).

## 16. Special Occasions of Prayer.

- a. When making important decisions (Lk 6:12-13).
  - (1) "Prayer is the best way to avoid human impulsiveness. ...It brings the Lord of the church into the decision-making process."<sup>17</sup>
- b. When commissioning church planters, evangelists, and missionaries (Ac 13:2-3).
- c. When commissioning elders (Ac 14:23).
- d. When saying goodbye (Ac 20:36; 21:5-6).
- e. When we are anxious, distressed, or troubled, like Hannah and Paul (1 Sa 1:10, 15-16; Php 4:6).
- f. When we feel sorrowful (Mt 26:38-39).
- g. When we are ill (Jas 5:14-16)
- h. When we are suffering (Jas 5:13).

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<sup>17</sup> William Yeager, *Who's Holding the Umbrella?*, 163.

- i. When we are being treated unjustly (Ps 109:4; Lk 18:7).

## 17. Unanswered Prayer.

- a. God responds to our prayers with a green light (yes), a yellow light (wait), or a red light (no).
- b. God may not answer our prayers because of:
  - (1) Our ways.
    - (a) Our unbelief (Jas 1:5-7).
    - (b) Our failure to abide in Jesus (Jn 15:7).
    - (c) We ask wrongly (Jas 4:3).
    - (d) Our lack of forgiveness (Mt 6:15).
    - (e) Our giving up too soon (Lk 11:5-8).
    - (f) Our lack of unity (Mt 18:19).
    - (g) Our failure to ask in Jesus' name (Jn 16:23).
    - (h) Our failure to honour our wives (1 Pe 3:7).
  - (2) Our world.
    - (a) A consequence of the fall is that our world is temporarily cursed. That curse won't be totally removed until God creates the new heavens and earth.
    - (b) God desires all people to be saved, but he won't force them to be saved.
      - 1) **Eze 18:23** 23 Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares Lord Yahweh, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?
      - 2) **Eze 18:32** 32 ...I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares Lord Yahweh. So turn and live.
      - 3) **1 Ti 2:4** 4 ...[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
    - (c) As King over his kingdom, God can but usually does not override man's free will. God is a gentleman.
  - (3) His will.
    - (a) We don't always know God's desire, so we can't always ask according to his desire (1 Jn 5:14).
    - (b) The Spirit, however, always intercedes according to God's desire (Ro 8:27).
    - (c) God is not obligated to answer any prayer outside of his desire. He is not at our bidding.
- c. When prayers go unanswered, remember Mark 14:36.
  - (1) Don't give up on God's love (Ro 8:28).
    - (a) "God's silence doesn't prove God's absence."
  - (2) Don't give up on God's power.
  - (3) Don't give up asking.
    - (a) "Teach me to pray every situation through until You accomplish what You have shown me You would accomplish in the situation."<sup>18</sup>
  - (4) Don't give up trusting God.

## 18. Corporate Prayer.

- a. Pray together in small groups (Mt 18:19; 26:37-39; Lk 9:28).

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<sup>18</sup> H. T. Blackaby and C. V. King, *Experiencing God*, 264.

- (1) Put out a call to pray and invite others to join you.
- (2) Establish a prayer chain.
- b. Pray together in large groups (Ac 1:14; 4:24; 12:12).
  - (1) “[Jim] Rayburn was notorious for calling in staff from all over the country, on the spur of the moment, for a weekend of prayer. That’s all, just prayer.”
  - (2) Engage in a “concert of prayer.”
- c. Pray together as church leaders (Ac 6:4).
- d. Results of corporate prayer are:
  - (1) Physical signs of God’s presence (Ac 2:2-3; 4:31).
  - (2) The filling of the Spirit (Ac 2:4; 4:31).
  - (3) Speaking God’s word with boldness (Ac 4:31).
  - (4) “The greatest untapped resource that I know of is the united prayer of God’s people.”<sup>19</sup>

## 19. Church Leaders and Prayer.

- a. Church leaders must devote themselves to prayer (Ac 6:4).
- b. Quotes:
  - (1) “Let our Christian orator, who would be understood and heard with pleasure, pray before he speak. Let him lift up his thirsty soul to God, before he pronounce anything.”<sup>20</sup>
  - (2) “None but God can teach [the pastor] to teach his people. Converse with Him in the study will give its own stamp of sanctity and energy upon his preparations for the pulpit.”<sup>21</sup>
  - (3) “The frame of our own minds in the pulpit is another matter for distinct supplication—that we may ‘speak as the oracles of God’—that ‘a door of utterance may be opened unto us’—that we may have a special message to our people—that our hearts may be tenderly affected by their state—that our preaching may flow from love to their souls, and from hearts powerfully excited by zeal for our Master’s glory—that we may be assisted to deliver our sermons in a suitable frame; preserved from the influence of the fear of man, and with a simple, earnest dependence on the Divine blessing—and that the Lord may preach our sermons to our own hearts, both in the study, and in the moment of delivering them. We must not forget the main end of our labour, in the power of our Ministry upon the hearts and consciences of our people. We need to pray for them, as well as to preach to them—to bring our Ministry on their account before God.”<sup>22</sup>
  - (4) “The better we pray, the better we study.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> H. T. Blackaby and C. V. King, *Experiencing God*, 259.

<sup>20</sup> Augustine.

<sup>21</sup> C. Bridges, *The Christian Ministry* (Kindle Locations 2825-2826).

<sup>22</sup> C. Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, Kindle Locations 2838-2844.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Doddridge, quoted in C. Bridges, *The Christian Ministry* (Kindle Locations 2812-2814).

- (5) “No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. The pulpit can be a shop window to display one’s talents; the prayer closet allows no showing off.”<sup>24</sup>
- (6) “Prayer enables the spiritual leader to seek God’s will in quiet solitude with Him.”<sup>25</sup>
- (7) “It is sadly possible to be so busily engaged in the work of God that we appear to have little or no time in which to be with God. This is a very subtle and extremely dangerous trap....”<sup>26</sup>

## 20. The Benefits of Prayer.

- a. When we pray:
  - (1) We won’t as often be led into temptation (Mt 6:13; Lk 22:46).
  - (2) We are empowered to speak God’s word with boldness (Ac 4:31).
  - (3) God’s peace guards our hearts and minds in Messiah Jesus (Php 4:7).
  - (4) We find grace to help in time of need (He 4:16).
- b. Quotes:
  - (1) “If you are of a devout spirit, you will rejoice at these returns of prayer which keep your soul in a holy enjoyment of God; which change your passions into Divine love, and fill you heart with stronger joys and consolation than you can possibly meet with in anything else.”<sup>27</sup>
  - (2) “Surely it was no accident that Jesus often let his disciples see him conversing with the Father. They could see the strength that it gave to his life, and though they could not understand fully what it was all about, they must have realised that this was part of his secret of life.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Leonard Ravenhill.

<sup>25</sup> William Yeager, *Who’s Holding the Umbrella?*, 161.

<sup>26</sup> G. Rowlands.

<sup>27</sup> William Law, *A Serious Call*, 186.

<sup>28</sup> R. E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 72.

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### ***Films***

War Room ([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvBUfx9\\_kRoGexuOLr3iKtg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvBUfx9_kRoGexuOLr3iKtg)).

### ***Courses***

The Prayer Course (<https://prayercourse.org>).

### ***Websites***

The Online Book of Common Prayer (<https://www.bcponline.org>).

*Notes*