

LEARNING TO PRAY

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I. Why Pray?

A. Because prayer works (James 5:16).

1. Note the following in the Book of Acts:

- a. *Chapter 2* – The Spirit is poured upon a prayer meeting.
- b. *Chapter 3* – A cripple is healed while Peter and John are on the way to a prayer meeting.
- c. *Chapter 4* – Multitudes are added to the church as earnest prayer results in a re-filling.
- d. *Chapter 5* – The disciples go to the Temple daily for prayer and many miracles occur as well as the cleansing of the church.
- e. *Chapter 6* – The preachers commit to continuous prayer and deacons are selected.
- f. *Chapters 7 & 9* – Deacon Stephen dies while praying and Saul is converted.

2. The **Law of Prayer** -- in Genesis 1:26 God gave man dominion over the earth; although lost by Adam, Jesus regained that dominion for us. God chooses not violate the authority He has given us; therefore, we should pray and ask Him to move. This law makes it legal for God to implement His will in the earth (John 16:24).

B. Because God **Hears** YOU! (I John 5:14) – all who get their prayers answered are not spiritual “giants” (Examples are the widow of Zarephath in I Kings 17 and the thief on the cross in Luke 23:42-43).

1. One will not develop a disciplined prayer life if motivated by fear, guilt, or enthusiasm (when these emotions subside, so will your prayer life) – there must be a **Conviction** that prayer works and that God will hear the persistent pray-er (Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:5-10).
 2. How much **Faith** does it take in order to get prayers answered? Hebrews 11:6 reveals two simple beliefs:
 - a. That **God** is.
 - b. That He rewards the diligent **Seeker**.
 3. Will **Doubt** keep me from being heard?
 - a. Even men of strong faith have had to deal with the problem of doubt (Example of John the Baptist – see John 1:29 and Matthew 11:2-11).
 - b. Doubt will not keep our prayers from being heard unless it is strong enough to keep us from praying (Example of Peter’s release from prison as a group of doubters prayed at John Mark’s house – see Acts 12).
- C. It **Builds** us spiritually so we can **Grow** (Jude 20).
- D. It **Imparts** the lives of our brethren (Ephesians 6:18).
- E. It **Impacts** governmental leaders (I Timothy 2:1-4).

II. THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER – Jesus gave us the model prayer, not to simply repeat, but to serve as a guide (Matthew 6:9–13).

Note the steps:

- A. **Worship** (“Hallowed be Thy name”) – God inhabits the praise of His people (Psalm 22:3), We are to “enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise” (Psalm 100:4).
- B. Choosing to operate according to the **Spiritual Laws** of the Heavenly Kingdom (Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven”).
- C. Trusting for **Material** provision (“Give us this day our daily bread”).
- D. **Confession** of our sins and forgiveness of those who have sinned against us (“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”).
- E. Putting on the **Whole Armor of God** (“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”).
- F. Declaration of our **Faith** by confession of our lips and thanksgiving for that which we have not yet seen with the natural eye (“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever”).

III. WHEN TO PRAY

- A. **Early** (Psalm 63:1) – meaning two things:
 - 1. “Early” in the day starts your day out with prayer **Before** distractions of the day can get hold of you.
 - 2. “Early” in the sense of praying **Before** you have a crises need, not waiting until something bad happens or trouble has come.

- B. **Continually** (I Thessalonians 5:17) – this means you have to be an **Asking** person, regularly praying about anything that concerns us, and to do so until the answer comes.

IV. WHAT TO PRAY FOR

- A. Governmental authorities (I Timothy 2:1-4).
- B. Forgiveness (I John 1:9).
- C. Your needs (Philippians 4:6).
- D. The sick (James 5:15).
- E. Each other – would include not only our brother in Christ but the lost in the nations of the world (I Thessalonians 5:25; Colossians 1:3).