



Prayer - Part I (Milk)

How does one communicate with God? The instant answer is in **PRAYER**.

In this teaching, we will touch on the various points

- **What is prayer?**
- **If God knows everything why do we need to pray?**
- **How to pray?**
- **Why are our prayers many a times not answered?**
- **What kind of prayer does God like?**
- **How much of praying is right in the eyes of God?**

Let me try and answer all these and other questions with regard to prayer as found in the Bible.

What is prayer?

Prayer comes from the word 'Pray', which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "to wish or hope strongly for something". This emotion has to come from your heart, and one can pray for anything with anyone. But when it comes to prayer, in a legal context, a "prayer" is the section of a lawsuit's complaint where the plaintiff formally requests specific relief or judgment from the court. In a spiritual context, "prayer" is defined as "a request for help or expression of thanks made to God or a god."

Sticking to spiritual context prayer is in short, a strong wish or hope or thanks that comes from your heart directed to God. It cannot be directed to anyone else other than God (or a small god).

We as believers of the true God can direct our prayers only to God. Praying to anyone else is a complete NO. We can ask others to intercede for us or help us lift our prayers to God.

Exodus 2:23-25

²³ During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.



Here in Exodus 2 we read that the 'long period' was 400yrs. For 400yrs God did not take note of the Israelites. He only noticed them due to their cries, because of the pain they under went under slavery.

The reason was that the Israelites did not worship Yahweh (Lord) but were also idol worshipers like their rulers, the Egyptians.

Exodus 32:7-8

⁷ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'"

We see when they thought they were lost, they immediately returned to their pagan practices.

Leviticus 17:7

⁷ They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols [Or demons] to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.'

Acts 7:43

⁴³ You have lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.

It took 400yrs for their cries of agony and pain to reach God. The option were very simple, either they could have easily prayed to God, seeking His help, or suffer like they did for 400yrs before God took notice of them. They could have easily sought God's help by just properly praying to Him.

This choice is also put before us today. Either we pray to God in our needs and problems, or suffer like the Israelites did for long years, for God to intervene and have mercy on us.

If God knows everything why do we need to pray?

There is a common belief, that "since God knows everything and He loves me, He will take care of my needs and my problems. Why do I need to pray?"

When God created the whole world after He made man, He gave man dominion over all the earth.

Genesis 1:26-28

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every



creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Since God gave dominion to man over the earth He will not intervene or break His word. Therefore we need to ask God to intervene, so that He can help us.

We can pray for ourselves or on behalf of others.

In a family, any member of the family can invite a guest/friend to the house, because we have the authority as a member of the family.

When we pray for others, as brothers and sisters, we ask God to intervene in their lives.

The Lord has said in His Word that if we need anything, it is for us to just ask and we will receive it from the Father. Even when we know how great a sinner we are, our Father still loves us and will answer our prayers.

Matthew 7: 7-11

⁷ "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸

For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

How to pray?

For this let's take some examples of prayers from the Bible.

Luke 18:10-14

¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other:

Here we learn that there were two people who prayed, but only one person's prayer was answered.



The Pharisee: he stood right in front, prayed about himself, thanked God, and told God that he was good. Unlike the others, he fasted twice a week, and he gave tithes.

What did he do? He thanked God, he kept himself well in the eyes of God, he fasted twice a week, and he gave tithes.

He was doing well, unlike most of us, since many of us neither fast nor give tithes. But yet, we learn that his prayer was not answered. What did he do wrong?

He stood right in front and told God how good he was, as if God did not know. He had pride in himself. He compared himself to others. He judged others, thereby bringing greater judgment on himself.

What did the publican do?

A publican/tax collector was the most hated person by the public. He was feeling bad about what he was doing. He humbled himself and was full of repentance.

He asked God for forgiveness and mercy.
His prayer was answered.

Matthew 6: 5,6

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

The Lord gave us a very simple and easy way to pray. He gave us a model prayer that we can say and use as a template to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

*⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.
¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

He did not say keep repeating this prayer but said pray like this. Here this model prayer if you analyze you will understand how to pray.

Our Father which art in heaven, (*acknowledging God and His power*) Hallowed be thy name (*praising and worshipping Him*)

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven (*acknowledging the authority of God and accepting it*)

Give us this day our daily bread (*acknowledging God provides our daily needs*)



And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (*acknowledging God forgives, at the same time committing we will forgiving others*)

And lead us not into temptation, (*humbling ourselves before God and telling him we are weak so do not put us to test*) but deliver us from evil (*asking for us to be made righteous again*). For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever (*Glorifying and worshiping Him*) Amen (*Accepting and saying 'Yes' in faith that our prayer is already answered*)

You may wonder why I said 'acknowledging God provides our daily needs' and 'acknowledging God forgives, at the same time committing we will forgiving others' when translations say 'give us our daily bread' and 'forgive our trespasses as we forgive our debtors'?

If we look up the Greek words translated as 'give' and 'forgive' they are not in future tense but in a Greek tense called Aorist which is past, present and future together. So we are not asking but declaring. He knows what we will eat tomorrow or the year ahead and has already provided, it is our faith that allows us to receive or not receive it, the same with forgiveness.

So Our Father not only gives us a beautiful prayer to say, but this the Lord showed us how to pray, the steps are:

- Acknowledge God as our Father (Creator, Protector and Provider).
- Acknowledge His authority and His high places.
- Glorify God and His Name.
- Accept Him and His Will in our lives and on all the earth.
- Acknowledge Him as the source of everything and as the giver of our daily needs.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Obey his commandments, and forgive others.
- Be humble and meek before Him.
- Ask for His protection.
- Again, glorify and praise Him.

This same mode can be used for our daily prayer, also. In fact, the same theme as the prayer 'Our Father' is given in the Old Testament - Palms. Our God is the same and will always be the same. So we do not have to change or be creative but be simple, meaningful and honest in our prayers.

Our God is Spirit and the best prayers are when our spirit prays. In the Old Testament God (Holy Spirit) was not in man, except for a few chosen ones. After the sacrifice of Jesus, now that we as a Church have received the Helper, the Holy Spirit of God, God Himself is now in us. He operates in spirit not in the natural, but His power manifests also in the natural.



John 4: 23

²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

One very important point to be mentioned here is, when we ask God for anything in prayer, we should do so in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was the payment for our salvation. He died for us and made everything lost available again for us.

When we prayer in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ we are just encashing the receipt. It is assured to us again and again that any prayer in the Name of Jesus shall be answered.

John 14: 13,14

¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.

¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.



John 15: 16

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

John 16: 23

²³ In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Why are our prayers many a times not answered?

When we say prayers of hope, not of faith or long, meaningless prayers, God does not answer them.

James 5:15

¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Our God understands one language, that is, the language of faith. So when we pray our prayer, it should be a prayer of faith, not of hope.

A prayer of hope is like a confused request. It's like me telling you to give me something, and then saying, "If you do not give me it is okay. I do not want to disturb you, I wanted this thing, but then I do not want to worry you etc.."

Then there is another kind of prayer that is only mouth exercise. I call them the 'chewing gum prayers'. In the beginning, they taste good; later they are only to pass your time. They do two good things, one give us mouth exercise and keep our teeth clean. Everybody sees them shinning and think you are holy.

Chewing gum payers to God is like you talking German (which I do not understand) to me. God does not understand a word of what you are saying or doing. I too started with these 'chewing gum prayers' till the Lord showed me what they really are.

Matthew 6: 7,8

⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Another thing is we might be making good prayers but we might be living a life of sin and do not want to come out of it. We are very comfortable in the ditch.

Isaiah 1:15

¹⁵ And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Mark 12: 40

⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Psalm 50: 16-23

¹⁶ But to the wicked, God says:

" What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips?

¹⁷ You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you.

¹⁸ When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw in your lot with adulterers.

¹⁹ You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit.

²⁰ You speak continually against your brother and slander your own mother's son.

²¹ These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you.

But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face.

²² "Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue:

²³ He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God."

In reality, we pray to God only when we want something or are in trouble and do see no way out or like the Pharisee in Luke 18:9. We do not say prayers to God from our hearts but to boost our pride, ego and to show the world how good we are. Do we really love God enough to give up all that we love, but which God hates?

What kind of prayer does God like?

When we pray, our prayer should be a prayer of faith not of hope. When we pray we should believe that our prayer is already answered and our answer is on its way. For all things come from the unseen world to the natural (visible) world.

Matthew 21:21-22

²¹ Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.



²² And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

In the scriptures before these when Jesus spoke to the fig tree and cursed it He did not doubt about the result. The same way He tells us we must prayer without doubting about receiving, even the impossible will be made possible.

How much of praying is right in the eyes of God?

So when you pray, even if you make a short prayer, make it sweet and let it be from your heart. Remember God in the Morning, Afternoon and Evening. It need not be a long hours of prayer, but even 15 minutes of prayer with continual worship or remembering Him/His Word is good in God's eyes.

Once a week, spend a little longer time with the Lord and once a month, spend at least half a day with the Lord. The Lord also says to keep the Holy Week Holy. That week, you should give as much time as possible to the Lord. As we grow in Spirit we will realize we can continually pray day and night even when we are doing our usual work or are asleep.

God is our Father, so talk to Him like you talk to your Father. If a father tells his child, "When I come back from work I will give you a chocolate." In the evening after the father comes back from office he will give his child a chocolate, but sometimes he does not give you the chocolate immediately, he waits to see if the child remembers his words. God is not deaf or hard of hearing; He many times tests whether we meant what we said.

So ask your Father, who is True to His word and is Holy. He will surely hear your prayer, for He loves you and will go to any extent for you. When He loves you so much that He gave His only Son for you, then what will He hold back from you?

Proverbs 15:29

²⁹ The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Above all, to make sure that your prayers be heard, keep yourself holy. Make the Lord your Lord and master, keep His commandments, serve Him, follow Him, fear the Lord till the day His ways are your ways and fear turns to love.

GOD Bless