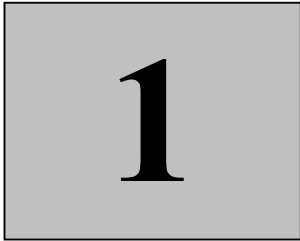

EFFECTIVE PRAYER SCHOOL

Course Objectives:

- To encourage and impart a desire for a rich and intimate lifestyle of prayer
- To lay a Biblical foundation of equipping for a confident and effective Spirit-empower life of prayer.
- To consider the prayer life modelled by Jesus, of the early church, and of the Apostle Paul.
- To understand the different types of New Testament prayers
- To develop the spiritual discipline of a rich prayer life.

Course outline over 5 sessions:

1. Jesus' school of prayer
2. The essential elements of effective prayer
3. The different kinds/types of prayers
4. Different kinds/types of prayer, continued.
5. Developing the spiritual discipline of prayer



JESUS SCHOOL OF PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

The Scriptures clearly invite and instruct us to pray, and there are many wonderful promises that God hears and answers our prayers.

"The earnest, heartfelt, continued prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available, dynamic in it's working." **James 5:16b** (Amp)

Prayer is a vital part of our relationship with God, and an effective prayer life is something that is both taught and "caught." We need to know the truth about prayer, but we also need to get into faith-filled environments of prayer which enrich and develop our prayer lives. Most of all, we need to PRAY! Ultimately, effective prayer is not measured by how we pray, when we pray, or what we pray, but by the results of our prayers.

Write down some of the "results" we are looking for from our prayers:

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Your big prayer question:

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1. JESUS' PRAYER LIFE

Jesus Himself modelled a dynamic prayer-filled relationship with God the Father to His disciples, and observing His prayer life, they asked Him:

“Lord, teach us to pray...”

Luke 11:1

Consider some aspects of Jesus' prayer life which would have intrigued His disciples?

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1.2 HOW DID JESUS TEACH HIS DISCIPLES?

1.2.1 Through His example of routine, priorities, and passion:

Mark 1:35 *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed*

Luke 6:12-13 ¹²*One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.* ¹³*When morning came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also designated apostles.*

Heb 5:7-8 ⁷*During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of his reverent submission.* ⁸*Although He was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered*

1.2.2 Through “preach-praying”

For example, when He rose Lazarus from the dead in **John 11:41-42**

⁴¹*So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.*

Consider: In what circumstances is “preach-praying” acceptable/not acceptable?

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1.2.3 Through what He prayed

For instance in what should probably more accurately be called “the Lord’s prayer” in John 17, where Jesus’ priorities, theology, and heart is so clearly and passionately expressed.

1.2.4 Through His specific teaching

As in response to their question: “*Lord, teach us to pray.*” We will now look at the essential elements of an effective prayer life as revealed in Luke 11:1-4.

Note: What Jesus taught is not a formula for repetition, but rather an outline of essential elements of an effective prayer life.

2

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER

2.1 JESUS PRAYER OUTLINE

Having been asked by His disciples to teach them to pray, Jesus answered:

Luke 11:2-4 ²...*"When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.* ³*Give us day by day our daily bread.* ⁴*And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one."*
(NKJV)

In The Message Translation it reads: *Father, Reveal who you are. Set the world right. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil."*

2.1.1 When you pray - PRAY!

- Establish a personal daily prayer routine discipline that works for you.
- Pray with others
- *Pray without ceasing* **1 Thess 5:17**

2.1.2 Our Father - Know God as Father...

Gal 4:6-7 ⁶*Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."* ⁷*So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

Heb 4:16 *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

2.1.3 ...in heaven: Assume the correct prayer "position" - seated together with Christ in heavenly places!

Eph 2:6 *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*

2.1.4 Holy is Your name: Worship God...

Heb 12:22 *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly*

Heb 13:15 *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.*

2.1.5 Your kingdom come: Firstly be a kingdom seeker...

Matt 6:33 *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

2.1.6 Your will be done on earth as in heaven: Understand and pray the revealed will of God...

1 John 5:14-15 ¹⁴*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.* ¹⁵*And if we know that He hears us; whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of Him.*

2.1.7 Give us our daily bread: Ask God for needs to be met...

John 16:23-24 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.* ²⁴*Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

- See also what Jesus teaches directly after this Lords prayer in Luke 1:9-13; 18:1-8.

NOTE: Jesus is not comparing God with the sleeping neighbour and the unjust judge - He's contrasting the two. Jesus does not say "keep asking for the same thing." Persistence in prayer does not mean that you have to twist God's arm to get what you want. It is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.

2.1.8 Forgive us our sins: Confession...

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Acts 3:19 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord*

2.1.9 As we forgive others: Consider and repent of any known hindrances to your prayer life:

Mark 11:25 *And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.*

2.1.10 Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil: Recognise your weaknesses...Be watchful in prayer against the schemes of the devil...

1 Peter 5:8-9 ⁸*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.* ⁹*Resist him, standing firm in the faith,*

Understanding the above elements of an effective prayer life, in the next section we will look at different kinds/types of New Testament prayers:

Eph 6:18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

Homework: Praying like Paul

Take the following three prayers of the Apostle Paul, and pray them into your own context:

Phil 1:9-11 ⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ; to the glory and praise of God.

Col 1:9-11 ⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

Paul always prayed believing that God is able!

Eph 3:14-21 ...²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.



UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT “TYPES” OF PRAYERS

INTRODUCTION

Eph 6:18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

List specific things which we are instructed/encouraged to pray for in the New Testament:

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DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRAYERS ARE PRAYED FOR DIFFERENT THINGS/NEEDS:

Learning Biblical principles and truth about different kinds of prayers will enrich your prayer life and equip you to develop a more effective prayer life.

1. The Prayer of Worship / Adoration
2. The prayer of consecration
3. The Prayer of faith
4. The Prayer of Commitment
5. Praying for Revelation knowledge
6. The Prayer of Confession
7. Praying in Tongues/ In the Spirit
8. The Prayer of Agreement
9. The Prayer of Binding and Loosing
10. The Prayer of Intercession
11. Praying for Healing
12. Praying for the Unsaved
13. Praying for Leaders and those in Authority
14. Pray for labourers in the harvest
15. The Prayer of Thanksgiving

1. THE PRAYER OF WORSHIP / ADORATION

Key words: Gods Presence. It's all about time with Him. You are worthy

- This is going to God without a selfish motive or need, just to enjoy His presence and to praise and worship Him. Seeking Gods heart, not His hand. The call to prayer is the Father's invitation to visit with Him. It is the call of love to come and fellowship.
- **Ps 27:4** *One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.*
- **Ps 27:8** *When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, Lord, I will seek.*
- **Ps 63:8** *My soul follows hard after You.*
This prayer requires quality time and focus - see Martha & Mary in Luke 10:38-42
- The Prayer of worship overflows into your life – see Acts 4:13

2. THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Key Words: "Not my will for my life, but YOUR WILL BE DONE WITH MY LIFE."

- This is not a "whatever God wants to do" prayer. Rather it is a conscious surrender and submission to Gods will for your life.
- Jesus prayer this prayer at the garden of Gethsemane - Mark 14:35-36
- Also Saul/Paul in Acts 9:6 "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Note: In the two examples above, Jesus knew what the Fathers will was, and Paul did not know at that stage. Jesus prayed to submit to what He knew the Father wanted, and Paul prayed to submit to anything the Lord would call him to.

- Every Christian should be prepared to pray this prayer.¹ *Pet 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*
- Have you prayed this prayer for your future?

3. THE PRAYER OF FAITH

Foundation Scripture: 1 John 5:14-15

Key Words: Ask in Faith

- The prayer of faith is a prayer for "things". Jesus stressed the importance of expressing all our needs to God. In John 16:24, Jesus told the disciples, "Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."
- Remember that faith comes from God's Word, therefore this prayer is us asking "according to God's will revealed in His Word."

How to pray the prayer of faith:

- **Be specific with your request.**

John 14:14 You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it.

- **Don't ask "amiss."**

James 4:2-3 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

- **If you don't know**

His will, then first seek to establish it (Pray for revelation knowledge and wisdom), and then pray and ask according to His will.

- **Read scriptures** that promise you the answer

(John 15:7; Jos 1:3) - Get the Word on it!

- **Don't be "double minded"**

James 1:6-8

- **Refuse to doubt**

(Rom 4:20, 21) - Abba Father can be trusted!

- **Believe that you have received**

You have got to believe that you have it before you get it.

Mark 11:23-24 ...²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

- **Meditate on the promise**

(Pro 4:20-22; Josh 1:8) - Don't meditate on the need/problem.

4. THE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Foundation Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34

Key Words: Trust in the Lord. Rest. Patience!

- Once you have prayed the prayer of faith, commit the need/problem/waiting to the Lord. The prayer of commitment says: "Father, you take it. You care about how I am going to be fed tomorrow, what I am going to wear tomorrow, where I am going to live tomorrow, and You know and care about all my needs. I trust You. I rest in You."

- **Cast your cares, worries and burdens on the Lord:**

1 Pet 5:6-7 ...⁷ *Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully* (Amp)

Phil 4:6-7 ⁶*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* ⁷*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- **Make a quality decision** to stop worrying.

WORRY = MEDITATING ON THE PROBLEM

- Have the correct attitude. Jesus did not say don't PLAN for tomorrow, but don't worry about tomorrow (Matt 6:34). Don't RUN or HIDE from your problems, but DEAL with them.
- Thank the Lord and give Him praise for the answer
- Do not pray about your cares (complaining!). Do not try to help God with your cares! Do what God says: Cast them on Him.

Ps 55:22 *Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.*

Ps 37:5-8 ⁵*Commit your way to the Lord [roll and repose each care of your load on Him]; trust (lean on, rely on, and be confident) also in Him and He will bring it to pass...* (Amp)

Prov 3:5-6 ⁵*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;* ⁶*in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

5. PRAYING FOR REVELATION KNOWLEDGE/WISDOM

Key Words: Help me understand. Show me Lord. Open my eyes to see.

Eph 1:17-18 *I pray...¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints*

James 1:5-6 *⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

Ps 119:18 *Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.*

1 Cor 2:9-16 *⁹But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man, The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit... ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God...*

Deut 29:29 *The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*

6. THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Key Words: I'm sorry. I repent. Forgive me.

2 Chro 7:14 *If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

Ps 32:5 *I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Prov 28:13 *He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*

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UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT “TYPES” OF PRAYERS Continued...

7. PRAYING IN TONGUES/IN THE SPIRIT

Key Words: The Spirit helps us. I do not know how I ought to pray.

Rom 8:26-27 ²⁶*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.* ²⁷*And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*

Remember: When we pray God's will (As the Holy Spirit does when we pray in tongues), God hears and God answers 1 John 5:14-15

NB: Distinguish between public and private tongues. The personal tongues is for the individual communicating with God .

(1 Cor 14:4 - He who speaks in a tongue builds himself up), and the public tongue is for God communicating with the church body

(1 Cor 12:7 - The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all)

Jude 20 *But you, beloved, build yourselves up [founded] on your most holy faith [make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], praying in the Holy Spirit;*

Don't just use tongues as a “warm-up” to prayer. Pray what you do understand, and then pray in tongues the deep issues of the heart and things beyond your understanding.

8. THE PRAYER OF AGREEMENT Foundation Scripture: Matt 18:18-19

Key Words: The power of agreement.

It is clear that we are not just called to pray alone, but to pray with others as well. The early church prayed together with great effect:

Acts 4:31 *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Jesus in **Matt 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.”*

- "Agree" = Greek SYMPHONEO = Harmonise

Pray this prayer only with someone who will be steadfast in agreement with you.

- Amos 3:3 - *Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?*
- Establish that you are in agreement before you agree to pray with someone for something.
- The word "Amen" literally means "I agree. Let it be established" – so be sure that what you are praying for is indeed God's will and that you have "it is written" faith for it.

There is no distance with the prayer of agreement. (phone!)

Good practice in general prayer meetings:

- Have a meeting leader who introduces the prayer focus
- Pray "through" one thing before going onto a new topic/need.
- Agreement doesn't mean repeating everything that's prayed before by someone else, but simply saying "amen"
- Don't pray loooooonng prayers, monopolising the time.
- Don't just sit there - Pray something! Verbalise your prayers so others can agree with you.

9. THE PRAYER OF BINDING AND LOOSING

Foundation Scripture: Mat 18:18 (Amp)

Key Words: Declare things illegal and improper.

Mat 16:19 *And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

Mat 18:18 *Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

In Amplified Bible: *Truly I tell you, whatever you forbid and declare to be improper and unlawful on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit and declare proper and lawful on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven.*

- To "bind" means to declare something to be "illegal and improper."

The prayer of Binding and Loosing puts a halt to Satan's activity:

Mat 12:29 *Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.*

2 Cor 10:3-6 ³*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. ⁶And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.*

Eph 6:16 *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

We are to spoil Satan's plans, plots and manoeuvres against God's people. Through the prayer of Binding and Loosing we can loose people from the bondage of the devil:

Luke 13:16 *Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"*

"Loosing" is to declare something legal and proper. We do this by proclaiming Gods Word over situations. We also loose ministering angels sent by God to serve us:

Heb1:14 *Are not the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent out in the service [of God for the assistance] of those who are to inherit salvation?*

Some important facts to consider:

1. Learn to true demon activity. Demons can inhabit nations, cities, people and animals, but don't look for "demons in every doorknob!"
2. See Satan as he truly is: James 4:7; 1 John 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8-9
3. Give no place to the devil: Eph 4:27; 1 Peter 5:8
4. Learn to rule and exercise authority (Luke 10:19) – see also the Bible School course: "Understanding your authority as a believer"

10. THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Key Words: To "stand together with against". Praying for others.

Rom 8:26-27 ²⁶*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express...*

- "Helps" = Greek "Sunantilamvanoma" = "to take hold against together with"
- Also in John 14:16-18, 26. "Comforter" = Greek "Paraclete" = "one called alongside to help"

Is 66:8 *For as soon as Zion was in labour, She gave birth to her children.*

Col 4:12 *Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

Gal 4:19 *My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

Eph 6:13 *Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

11. PRAYING FOR HEALING

Key Words: By His stripes we ARE healed

Acts 28:8 *And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.*

Isa 53:5 *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. (see also 1 Peter 2:24)*

James 5:16-16 ¹⁴*Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

Pray for health, not just healing:

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. **3 John 1:2**

12. PRAYING FOR THE UNSAVED

Key Words: God desires ALL to be saved.

Rom 10:1 *...my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.*

Pray specifically for:

- Their eyes to be opened to the light of the Gospel
2 Cor 4:3-5 ³*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them...*
- For the Holy Spirit to convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgement
John 16:8-11
- Pray for the gospel to be presented to them by the right person
Eph 6:19 *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.*

Note: Everyone has a free will, so recognise that we are praying for the unsaved to be free to choose Christ.

13. PRAYING FOR LEADERS & THOSE IN AUTHORITY

1 Tim 2:1-4 ¹Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Pet 2:13-17 ¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ¹⁶Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king.

14. PRAYING FOR LABOURERS IN THE HARVEST

Luke 10:2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Isa 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

15. THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & PRAISE

Thanksgiving prayer is a response to God's goodness, recognising His faithfulness and all He has done.

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving

Ps 103:1-5

- ¹Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!
- ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:
- ³Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,
- ⁴Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies,
- ⁵Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Heb 13:15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name.

SOME HINDRANCES TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER

1. Sin

Isa 59:1-3 ¹*Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. ²But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. ³For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things.*

2. Relational disunity

1 Pet 3:6-7 ...⁶*Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

3. Hypocrisy/Pretence

Mat 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. ⁶But 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.*

4. Wrong motives

James 4:3 *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

5. Unforgiveness

Mark 11:25 *And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."*

6. Doubting / Double mindedness

James 1:6-8 ⁶*But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*



Developing the spiritual discipline of “PRAYER”

The early church *“devoted themselves...to prayer...”*
(Acts 2:42)

The objective of this discipline is simply to have
a VITAL AND CONSISTENT CONNECTION WITH GOD.

This lesson is divided into three parts:

1. The Motivation to Pray
2. The Practicals of Prayer
3. The hindrances to Prayer

1. THE MOTIVATION TO PRAY - “The Call to my knees”

Our goal is not the Spiritual Discipline of Prayer but rather it is the means to having a consistent connection with God.

Prayer is the way we communicate with God, so this is obviously a highly important spiritual discipline, as we all know that communication is vital to the health and growth of any relationship.

In John 15: 1 – 8 Jesus uses the analogy of a vine and branches to describe what our relationship should look like.

- V 5 I am the vine – you are the branches
- Remain/abide in me and I will abide in you which results in much fruit.
- Apart from me you can do nothing.
- V7 If we abide – his word abide in us then as we ask we will receive.
- V8 Bearing much fruit glorifies God and shows us to be his disciples.

Jesus’ example:

Jesus demonstrated this type of relationship with the Father so much so His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. He made prayer a priority. Prayer = communication/connection with God.

- Luke 4: 42 *Jesus went to a solitary place at daybreak to pray*
- Luke 6:12 *Jesus went on the mountainside and spent the night praying to God*
- John 4:19 *Jesus said: ‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.*

See also:

- Jer 33:3 *Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*
- Acts 2:42 *They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* The result in
 - Acts 2:43 *‘Everyone was filled with awe and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles*
 - Acts 2:47 *The Lord added daily to the church those who were being saved*
- Acts 6:4 *‘...and we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.’*

2. THE PRACTICALS OF PRAYER – “I’m on my knees, now what?”

A. There are 2 vital aspects to a dynamic prayer life: Fellowship & Partnership

1. Fellowship in Prayer

The fellowship side of prayer is when we come to be with God in the intimacy of relationship through worship, praise, adoration and exaltation.

E.g. Paul states to the Philippians that His greatest aim in life is to know Jesus Christ! – Phil 3:8

Also Phil 3:8...*I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...*

2. Partnership in Prayer

The partnership side of prayer is when we exercise the responsibilities of partnering with Him to pray for needs, circumstances, for others, for leaders, cities, nations etc. This is the prayer of faith, the prayer of agreement, intercession, etc. There are many styles and preferences of praying and interceding (See some brief “types of intercessors” at the end of this lesson)

List a few practical prayer partnership opportunities in your church life:

In the life of Jesus we see the amazing balance between fellowship and partnership in his relationship with the Father. Can you see this balance in Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 6:5-15?

B. A plan for your prayer time:

A framework/guide:

Use the word “ACTS” as a guide:

- A = Adoration
- C = Confession [of word and sin]
- T = Thanksgiving
- S = Supplication

When? What is the best time to pray?

- “First thing’s first” is a good principle. We see the bible talking about Jesus arising at daybreak to pray as well as praying all night.
- Consider your circumstances and personal make-up, and give God the best time.

When? WHERE is the best place for me to pray?

- Ideally one free from distractions – where is the place that you can give God your undivided attention. Jesus spoke about going to a private place to pray and He himself went to a solitary place. Switch off computers, phones, etc.

Journaling – write it down!

- It is always good to have somewhere to note the impressions or insights or observations that God is communicating you through His word, pictures or even impressions/thoughts. If we don't then we will forget about them – always good to go back and see what He is /has been saying to us.

Be careful of empty rituals

- Don't make prayer a religious ritual, just ticking the boxes?! In all we do we are encouraged to ensure that our connection with God is a real connection or else we are in danger of 'Having a form of godliness but denying its power' 2 Tim 3:5

3. HINDRANCES TO PRAYER - "What stops me getting to my knees?"

What are some of the reasons we find prayer difficult?

- God seems to be distant and uninterested.
- It seems to require too much of my time to be effective
- I don't seem to be able to do it very well and I'm not sure how to really pray
- Deep down I doubt whether prayer really works
- I feel I am not good enough to deserve an answer
- I am not sure that I am praying in line with God's will

Some common hindrances:

1. Lack of knowledge of God and His Character – we project our own feelings or experiences onto Him.
2. Lack of knowledge of God's Ways/Word.
 - Eph 1:17-18; Eph 3:1-14; Col 1:9 -13; Ps 23; Rom 8; Rom 12; Luke 10:19; Is 61; Is 60; Is 53; Is 55; Ps 18; Ps 68; Ps 91; Ps 138; Ps 46; Ps 103; Jer 29:9-13; Jer 33:3
3. Busyness – no time (More Martha than Mary)
4. Our Emotions rule us.
5. Sin and disobedience.
 - Sin separates: Isaiah 59:2 *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*
 - Learn to come to throne of grace in time of need - Heb 4:14-16
6. Spiritual Opposition & the schemes of the enemy:
 - Condemnation; Infirmary; Deception; Intimidation; Accusation; Isolation; Persecution; Temptation; Distraction; Passivity

Summary:

1. Get to know your God.
2. Know yourself in relation to God
3. Know when to resist your enemy

Remember: *The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]. James 5:16b*