

The Priority of Prayer

To pray is to realize that God has more for you than you currently know about and that He actually wants to share it with you ~ Anonymous (Jer 33:3)

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ~ Ephesians 3:16-17

Prayer is talking to and with God - it is a two-way conversation! ~ Joy Schroeder

To pray is to center your heart and mind on God. He is around you, above you, within you when you ask Him to live there... he is everywhere all at once. He is always with you.

As you pray, you will become increasingly aware of how He looks at things, what He thinks and what He wants to do.

So, it is always good to wait a couple seconds before you start talking to God about the subject on your mind so you can "come into His presence" and "wait on Him." *"I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry" Ps 40:1*

Action:

- Stop for a moment and practice setting your heart on God, becoming aware that He is right here. In this place, practice listening to Him. You can even write down what you hear or sense.
- After a few moments of this, share with each other what you became aware of about God and what he spoke to you.

He loves to speak and reveal His Presence, and you will become more aware the more time you take to notice.

What Does Prayer Do?

1) Prayer helps you know God!

Read Hebrews 11:1-3; Ephesians 2:8-10 (I recommend the New Living Translation)

- The more time you spend with someone, the more you get to know about them. The crazy part is that the Creator of the Universe wants you to know him! And he invites us to spend time with him so we can know him more!
- Faith and Obedience are closely tied to knowing God more! In prayer we practice knowing his voice, which takes faith. Then we walk out our faith, this requires obedience; doing what we have heard. This continual process helps us know God more!
- Through repetition of spending time with him we become more confident of his voice. The more we respond in obedience, the more he will share with us.

2) Prayer releases God's Power!

Read James 5:13-16; Ephesians 3:16-17; Mark 9:14-29

- Through your connection with God, you can hear what He wants to do (Ask, then listen). Prayer releases God's power to work and calls into being what God wants to happen in your life and in the lives of others!
 - *I saw a gal walking on crutches and I felt God put in my heart his desire to heal her. I asked her why she was on crutches and then asked if I could pray. She said, YES! So I prayed. I asked her how it felt. She said, "it feels better!" I asked if I could pray again and after praying, she said, "I couldn't do this much bending before!" This example is of me hearing what God wanted to do and then releasing it by praying.*
 - *I was spending time with God he shared with me, 'Sarah, you will bind up the brokenhearted and set captives free.' In this moment, I felt a power hit my heart and knew that God was sharing with me his purposes for my life. That moment with Jesus continues to give me confidence to do things I never thought I would do!*
 - *A student wanted prayer before heading home for the summer. I said, "Of course! Let me get some anointing oil." I felt led by God to anoint her with oil as a symbol that she was the Lord's, set apart for his purposes. When I did this, she contorted and said, "Something in me doesn't like that oil!" I knew this was demonic. I began to pray over her and commanded the enemy to go in Jesus' name. After praying for several minutes, she finally declared Jesus over her life and then she was filled with peace! The demonic had left. I anointed her with oil and we prayed for her summer! I responded to the Lord & his power brought her deliverance.*

Action:

- Ask God if there is anything he has for you to do today? Remember, He loves to release his power through YOU! When you hear his instruction determine to do it!

Goal:

- What can you set up in your routine to make sure that prayer and connection with God happen daily?
- Determine to make spending time with him a priority.

Use the prayer Jesus taught below as a guide for your time in prayer. Some will start with 3min on each section to help them get used to relaxing and just getting use to being with God for longer periods of time. The more we can learn to stop and relax, the more we will hear him and enjoy our times of prayer.

Different Things Jesus Instructed Us To Include When We Pray:

Read Matthew 6:9-13

- 1) Acknowledge Him as your Father.

- a) When you talk to God, you are talking to your daddy - your Heavenly Father.
 - b) He loves you and wants you to know your place/identity as his kid. Imagine this: the Creator of EVERYTHING is your dad. Now think about what that means for YOU!
- 2) Worship Him
- a) Adore him for who he is & thank him for what he has done!
 - b) Do this out loud and verbally give him worship
 - c) Focus on what Jesus did on the cross; on various character traits of God like his faithfulness; on ways he has shown himself to you; etc...
- 3) Invite His Will to be Done here on Earth
- a) This is intercession - inviting God to rule in all areas here on earth (just like He is already ruling in Heaven!). This can be in the lives of people; in their health needs, in your workplace, in the nation(s), in your dorm/community, etc...
 - b) Just think about areas that bother you/ you know they need change/places that don't look like Heaven on earth yet.... Then think, If Jesus were here, what would happen? or What would he do? and then pray for that!
- 4) Share Your Needs with Him
- a) He loves to care for you and nothing is too small for him to care about. You are his kid. Take time to let him know what you need!
 - b) Ask him simply for what you need. You don't need to beg from your dad.
- 5) Confess your sins and ask for forgiveness
- a) Sins put up a barrier in our communication with God. But He promises to forgive us when we are honest about our wrongs and ask for his forgiveness.
 - b) It is so healthy for our hearts to acknowledge when we mess up. It keeps us humble and doesn't allow pride to keep us from our loving Father.
- 6) Ask for grace to avoid temptations
- a) God's power gives us the grace to say "no!" to temptations and also to show us a way out of them!
 - b) If you are dealing with a temptation, ask God to show you his way out and then say "NO!" to temptations in the future.
- 7) Ask for deliverance from evil or demonic powers that would want to invade your thoughts or influence your actions.
- a) Jesus in YOU gives you authority over any demonic powers. They will try to influence you, but you are not subject to them. However, it is important that you know your position as God's kid!
 - b) Jesus has given Christians the task of enforcing His authority over Satan on earth until He returns to set up His reign and destroy Satan. You enforce Christ's authority through your prayers and your obedience.
- 8) Worship him again - for His is the Kingdom, the Power & the Glory forever! Amen