



TYPES OF PRAYERS



MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

BIBLE STUDY LESSON

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Types of Prayer

Personal

Intercessory

Faith

Obedience

Forgiveness

Constancy

Demonstration

Release

Evangelistic

In the Spirit

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Before we attempt to take these ten areas of prayer life styles, let's address the question: "What is prayer?" The following definition seems most precise, "Prayer is an earnest sincere address to God with adoration, confession, supplication, thanksgiving and requisition." We do not pray simply because we have personal needs, or because we want to escape some crisis. We pray because we are in need of continuous communication with our Creator, for strength, healing, forgiveness, empowerment and fulfillment. We pray to God because God is worthy of every ounce of our devotion, loyalty, praise and holy worship. Let's get at the heart of what earth-shattering prayer can do:

What in me is dark, illuminate;
What is low, raise and support;
That, to the heights of this great argument,
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
(author unknown)

When we pray, God is effectually and effectively working on our behalf to bring comfort and relief. We pray to God, the Father (Abba), who is our Creator; the source of supply for all human needs. Jesus taught us to pray directly to God our Father (Matthew 6:9). We pray in the name of Jesus. Did not Jesus himself say: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name; that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

Jesus' name seals our prayers and opens heavenly avenues that bring good results.

We pray in the power of the Holy Ghost (the Holy Spirit). Jesus reminds us that the Holy Ghost is our Companion and Comforter (John 16:7-11).

The Spirit of God convicts and convinces:

“Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you in all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.” (John 16:13)

It is comforting to know that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost all work with us, and for us, to give believers joy in the midst of sorrow, stability in times of crisis, persistence in storm-filled seasons, and hope in moments of despair. This is the secret of prayer power.

PERSONAL PRAYER

Personal prayer is our individual, daily communication time with God. Jesus implores his followers to take their prayer time seriously by resisting distractions and impediments during daily prayer time:

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy father which is in secret, and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:6)

In our personal prayer time, we seek God’s forgiveness for sins of omission (things we left undone) and sins of commission (things which we should not have done). In our time with God, we learn to praise God for the wonders of creation, for job, schooling, social advancements; for family, friends and fellow disciples; for the needy, the lost and the languishing; for enemies swayed by demonic intentions; and for personal power in the midst of temptations and enticements. When was the last time you shut your door, blocked out all distractions, so that you could have a heart-to-heart talk with God? When was the last time you told the Lord, “thank you” for his salvation, love and grace? What time have you given in attending to your own struggles and trials, and sought the Lord’s intervention in your life? It’s time for all baptized, spirit-filled believers to enter our secret closets and “have a little talk with Jesus.”

May we each emulate King David who vowed: “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense and the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2)

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Intercessory prayer is our representation to God in behalf of someone or some persons who have special needs. For example, Johnnie is in prison, and even though you cannot visit him, you pray for his increase in wisdom, understanding and changed behavior. That's intercessory prayer.

It is praying on behalf of someone in need. James 5:13-15 gives us insight into intercessory prayer as a crucial aspect of church ministry. We are responsible for each other, in Christ:

“Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over them, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and he shall rise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

Sometimes we simply cannot see how life circumstances will change. All indicators point to bleak possibilities. There are sometimes in our lives when, as James Weldon Johnson put it, “hope unborn had died.” But faith people are not deterred by what is not visibly apparent. They claim with the Hebrew writer that, “...Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not see.” (Hebrews 11:1) As we exercise our faith, we can be sustained by the promise of our Lord who says:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”
(Matthew 7:7-8)

In faith praying we ask, seek, and knock, knowing that Jesus promises us that we have been given the power to speak things that are not as if they are. How do we cultivate praying in faith? Here Jesus is more instructive, “Whatever ye desire, when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” (Mark 11:23-24)

THE PRAYER OF OBEDIENCE

This is the prayer to put us in the perfect will of God. Remember that it was our first father and mothers’ disobedience that placed the cosmos into sin ruin. Adam and Eve’s decision to go against the wishes of their Creator and Benefactor put all of humanity into the death grip of Satan and his hosts. Apostle Paul asserts in Romans 5:12,

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...”

However, Jesus reverses Adam’s error. Paul asserts, “for as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Romans 5:19) Sin was hatched in a Garden called “Eden”. Sin was obliterated in a Garden called “Gethsemane.” In Matthew 26:36-46 we get an intimate look at Jesus. In Gethsemane, he falls on his face in painful prayer “O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” (vs 39, 42, 44) Three times Jesus repeats these words, and finally the resolve to go all the way to Calvary to redeem humanity from our collective and individual sins. Jesus teaches us to pray in obedience to the will of God: “Let thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

THE PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

Perhaps the hardest issue in life is to forgive others. Bitter quarrels, unsettled jealousies and unbridled hurts often build walls of separation between persons, races, classes, sexes and age groups. When patterns of pain and hurt become entrenched in the human psyche and/or in human relationships, it is certain that there will be conflict, confusion and a collapse of civility.

In the New Order established by Jesus, forgiveness is a major theme. It becomes the goal of spiritual maturity. In the Lord's prayer, Jesus encourages us to seek forgiveness of others, even as we seek their forgiveness of us. It is reciprocal: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Matthew 6:12)
(Another word for "trespass" is "debt")

We are indeed trapped into psychological debt, as long as we do not allow the rays of God's grace to release us from bitter memories and problems. Jesus could require of his disciples a life style of forgiveness because that was the central motif of his own ministry:

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)

If there is a conflicting problem between people, Jesus calls them to bring their gift to the altar and there seek forgiveness. (Matthew 5:22-24)

Finally, Jesus proves his own commitment to his life style of forgiveness: nails driven in his hands and feet, crown of seventy-two thorns on his brow, stab wounds in his side, a humiliating torture by Persian crucifixion on a wooden crucifix. Yet, we see Jesus bloody and maimed, cry out from the cross, the sweetest words of universal salvation:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

Pray for a forgiving heart. Learn to let unkind words roll off you as water runs down a duck’s back. Learn to open yourself to see the good in people. Life is too short to hold grudges. Let love abound in your daily trek.

THE PRAYER OF CONSTANCY

Though Jesus admonishes us not to be “like the Gentiles” by parodying long, verbose prayers, there are times when we must pray – and pray again – until our change comes! James describes this active constant prayer this way:

“The effective fervent prayer of a righteous (person) availeth much.” (James 5:16b) Part of the problem with our Christian prayer life is that even though we are saved, we are not yet delivered! Indeed, the very cosmos is in agonizing pain because of the prevailing sin condition which abounds. Says the Apostle Paul in Romans 8: 22-23.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now, and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Precisely because we are confronted by social brokenness, brazen lawlessness, immorality and spiritual callousness, we are trapped in this morass waiting anxiously to escape. What we cannot do because of our weak and inadequate abilities, the Spirit will do: “Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth... for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (vs 26) Life may see at a stand-still now, but keep praying. Remember, God did not bring you this far to leave you by yourself. Help, Holy Ghost, Help – is on the way!

PRAYER OF DEMONSTRATION

Sometimes, God uses us in the living of our days to become points of miraculous break-throughs. Through our faith in a powerful God, God uses our “agreements” with his will to demonstrate grand and gorgeous possibilities. Remember Moses at the Red (Reed) Sea? The Pharaoh’s army behind him, barren wilderness on both sides of him, and an impassable sea before him. Moses prays the Prayer of Demonstration: “...Fear ye not, stand still, see the salvation of the lord, which he will show you today. For the Egyptians who ye have seen today, ye shall see them no more forever.” (Exodus 14:13) The sea rolled up on both sides, Moses and the children of Israel, walked on dry ground to the other side. A demonstration.

Remember Elijah the prophet on Mount Carmel? He feels that he is God’s last spokesman, surrounded by four hundred fifty prophets of Baal. Yet he challenges them to a dual. Hear Elijah:

“And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: That the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.” (1 Kings 18:24)

They cried to Baal, “O Baal, hear us” but no voice could be heard. The stone silence of idols. The prophets of Baal cut and injured themselves, and were later killed. Yet, God showed the people his wonder working power.

“Then the fires of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice... And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, “he is the God”. (vs 38-39)

Elijah prayed the prayer of demonstration.

Are there times in your life when God uses you before family, friends, unsaved colleagues or weak-kneed fellow disciples to demonstrate his awesome power to perform miracles through your life? Let us pray that God will do it again and again.

THE PRAYER OF RELEASE

Sometimes our daily walk is riddled by burdens, sickness, depression, guilt and despair. We may really feel trapped in our “yesterday” world. Memories of past mistakes, or even habits hard to break, dog our trail. We are in the prison-house of our own self-hate, self-destruction, self-defeat. But God did not save us to wallow in our guilt. Nor did he redeem us through his Son to remain where we were before we were saved. As we become patient with ourselves, we pray the prayer of release. That is, we seek to whole-heartedly rely upon our God, rather than on our feeble earthly (flesh) existence, to be set free from our foibles and faults of yesterday. What triggers our change in consciousness? It is this: God has not condemned us because of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul rightly declared this fabulous truth:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” (Roman 8:1)

Isn't it a grand thought to know that your “rap” sheet has been cleansed, your yesterdays forgiven, your sins arrested, your “old” nature altered? Release it! What ever it is that separates you from God's love! Crack, liquor, negative attitudes, lying tongues, sexual promiscuity, belligerent relationships. Release it and turn it over to God – for he forgives and forgets.

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound?
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found.
Was blind, but now I see.”

THE EVANGELISTIC PRAYER

As Baptists, we follow the Lord's two explicit commands (called "ordinances"), to baptize by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19-20) The second ordinance (command) is in memory of the death and suffering of Jesus, received as bread (symbolic of his body) and wine (symbolic of his blood) Matthew 26:19-30. Baptism and the Lord's Supper was ordained by Christ for us to follow in the order that he performed these sacred acts. But there is another command of Jesus – an evangelistic charge to his church, to "go ye into the world: to teach, baptize, and follow the doctrines and disciplines of our Lord, until he comes again.

There will be none to be baptized, nor a church actively in memory of Christ's death, if his church refuses to salvage the world. Our job is to seek the salvation of sinners. James says in chapter 5:20, "Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." There is much talk these days of "The Full Gospel" or a "New Gospel". There is nothing that can be more "full" of good news (the meaning of the term "gospel") than the golden words of Jesus in "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but shall have everlasting life."

We do not need anything newer than 3:17

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

It's still the gospel truth that any person, anywhere and anytime, can be saved:

"...If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Now, that's full Gospel – chock full of God's Amazing Grace.

Anyone who is living in a state of sin is operating in disobedience to God.
Pray with them the sinner's prayer:

“Lord, I am a sinner in need of the saving power of your son Jesus. Please forgive me of my sins. Wash me clean through his blood. Change my life that I may follow him always. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.”

Please remember, we cannot save another soul, but we know who can! Jesus can change you through and through. “He's such a great Savior!”

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

This final aspect of praying (for these studies), praying in the Spirit, ought to be understood clearly. Some people became so saturated and sanctified by the Spirit until they lose their earthly balance. Some refuse sleep, don't care for their bodies, or even become anti-social, judgmental or self-righteous. The Spirit is a free gift of God to all.

First: recognize that the Spirit of God is already in you:

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” (Romans 8:9)

Second: we are set free from sin and death (vs. 2) through “the spirit of life in Christ Jesus...”

Third: we are called to choose the “spirit walk” that is, daily seeking of the Spirit's presence in our lives as we overcome our carnality (our fleshly dependencies and habits).

Fourth: the Spirit is the source of our daily strength. It was the same Spirit of God that raised up Jesus from the dead, that gives us our stamina and strength for daily living (vs. 22).

Fifth: the Spirit constantly reminds us who we are: The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are “the children of God.” It also clarifies *whose* we are: “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” (vs. 17) Therefore, like Jesus in the Lord’s Prayer, we live daily proclaiming that our God is our Intimate Parent: “but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.”

Sixth: the Spirit helps us to deal with our weaknesses our “infirmities” (vs. 26)

Seventh: the Spirit keeps us within the perfect “will of God” (vs. 27)

Eight: the Spirit is our assurance that even though some “things” may not always work out in life, “...all things work together for good to them that love God...” (vs. 28)

So when you pray in the Spirit release self-preoccupation, and focus on the presence of the living God in your life. Not only will the Spirit change your attitude, it will also alter your direction and equip you to fight the good fight of faith. So dance, shout, rejoice and praise God:

“Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me, melt me, make me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.”

NIGHT OR DAY DON’T FORGET TO PRAY!

It is now time for God’s people to realize that their weakness in evangelistic zeal, church growth and victorious personal living can be traced to one deficit – our refusal to practice God’s presence in our lives. Just a little talk with God each day can transform the drudgery of our lives, and set “a prayer wheel turning.” It’s a truth in the statement: “Little prayer, little Power –

Much prayer, much Power.” Our African forebears in slavery understood the critical, central importance of prayer. Though denied every right, crippled by legal imposition, contained by plantation guards, spied on, and forced to work from sun-up to sun-down without pay, they yet would have “a little talk”. Here’s how they put it:

Just A Little Talk With Jesus

I once was lost in sin but Jesus took me in
And then a little light from heaven filled my soul
It bathed my heart in love and wrote my name above
And just a little talk with Jesus made me whole

Sometimes my path seems dreary without a ray of cheer
And then the cloud about me hides the light of day
The mists in me rise and hide the stormy skies
But just a little talk with Jesus clears the way

I may have doubts and fears, my eyes be filled with tears
But Jesus is a friend who watches day and night
I go to Him in prayer, He knows my every care
And just a little talk with Jesus makes it right

Chorus

Now let us have a little talk with Jesus
Let us tell Him all about our troubles
He will hear our faintest cry
He will answer by and by
Now when you feel a little prayer wheel turning
And you know a little fire is burning
You will find a little talk with Jesus makes it right

TO FAST AND PRAY

“...when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face: That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:17-18)

People fast and pray for different reasons. Christians, for example, fast and pray for God’s guidance, through meditation on His Word. Some others fast and pray for the strength to purge their body, mind, heart and soul; while others seek forgiveness and humility in the sight of God. Others still, fast for political or dietary concerns.

From a religious viewpoint, periodic cleansing of the heart and soul is important for spiritual health. Among Christians, the period of Lent (the 40 days before Easter) is a season of penitence, a time for giving up worldly pleasures in an effort to show appreciation for the supreme sacrifice God made by allowing His Son to die to save human kind. The somber mood which characterizes the Lenten season is complemented by the meager sustenance of fasting to which some limit themselves.

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim year, marks the beginning of their annual month of fasting. It is a time of purification which brings Muslims together spiritually; the world over. At this time, participation in fasting is deemed the obligation of every responsible Muslim, and there is no eating or drinking during the daylight hours.

Fasting requires discipline; prayer requires faith. It is, some say, the direct channel between man’s spirituality and the Creator’s. Believers of the Seventh Day Adventist faith; contend that the best way for prayer to be effective is through purging the mind and body. Maintaining a healthy nutrition, both in the eyes of God and humanity, is considered extremely important and fasting requires good planning.

A 5,000-year-old-discipline, fasting is the voluntary to refrain from eating food for a specified period of time. However, this does not mean malnutrition or starvation.

In fact, most people undergo a short fast every day. When we go to bed at night, we don't consume anything until the next morning. "Break-fast" actually breaks the fast of the night before.

Although fasting is safe for almost everyone, adaption to fasting differs from person to person. Our bodies have resources for self-nourishment over long periods of time because the nutrition process continues as though food were still being consumed. With sound preparation and directions, most people can fast safely.

There are two aspects that are of primary significance during a fast. **First**, to assist the process of elimination of waste matter, it is important to drink lots of water; it flushes out the poisons and waste that accumulate in fatty tissues and relieves "hunger pangs" that occur at the beginning of a fast.

Secondly, free your mind. Your mental attitude is a prime factor in the success of your fast. Although fasting is an exercise of discipline and concentration, it should be effortless. You should be relaxed because you have come to terms with exactly why you are not eating.

Your Attitude should be that you are going to enjoy the psychic and spiritual benefits of fasting, as well as reap the physical gains.

A short term fast of 24 to 36 hours, once a week, is a very effective cleansing for the body. Fasting for a week or more reforms the palate. Cravings for sweet, fatty, high processed and synthetic foods dissipate.

Don't worry about getting hungry. It's usual to feel hunger pangs at the undertaking of a fast, but these sensations usually subside after about three days. During a fast of about month, real hunger occurs when the body starts to consume its protein. The return of normal, natural instinctive hunger is generally interpreted as a sign that it is time to resume eating

BREAKING THE FAST

It's important that you break your fast correctly. When you resume eating, smaller portions are better. Do not add seasoning to your food, continue drinking lots of pure water, and eat slowly. Avoid over burdening your digestive system and use discretion in your food.

Remember, as your body and mind are cleansed, your spirit will rise. Supporters of fasting, attest to feeling better, looking younger and experiencing mental rejuvenation.

(Matthew 4:1-4) states most eloquently, the strength that can be derived from fasting and praying. According to the scripture reference, "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward a hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread!" But he answered and said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

How To Spend An Hour With God In Prayer

- 1. Praise – Recognizing God’s Presence In Nature And in Life’s Unfolding.....Psalm 63:3.**
- 2. Waiting – Becoming Silent Soul Surrender.....Psalm 46:10.**
- 3. Confession – Initiating Temple Cleansing Time.....Psalm 139.23.**
- 4. Scripture Praying – Enriching Prayer Living.....1 Thessalonians 5:18.**
- 5. Watching – Developing Holy Alertness.....Colossians 4:2.**
- 6. Intercession – Remember The World.....Timothy 2:1-2.**
- 7. Petition – Sharing Personal NeedsMatthew 7:7.**
- 8. Thanksgiving – Confessing My Blessings.....1 Thessalonians 5:8.**
- 9. Singing – Worship In Song.....Psalm 100:2.**
- 10. Meditation – Rethinking And Pondering Spiritual Them.....Joshua 1:8.**
- 11. Listening – Receiving Spiritual Instruction..... Ecclesiastes 5:2.**
- 12. Praise – Celebrating God’s Victory (Closure).....Psalms 52:9.**

10 WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR PRAYER LIFE

- 1. Obedience – Start doing what God tells you to do.**
- 2. Seek The Lord – Spend intimate time with Him.**
- 3. Study His Word – Daily Increase your Word Intake.**
- 4. Pray – Be Consistent. Pray without ceasing.**
- 5. Fast – Deny your flesh on a regular basis.**
- 6. Associate – Associate with persons that pray, and have a true lifestyle of Prayer.**
- 7. Praise and Worship – Live like a true worshipper**
- 8. Love God and People – True ministry flow out of an Agape love for God and people.**
- 9. Confession/Repentance – Daily offer your life to God for cleansing. Un-confessed sin causes “weak” prayers.**
- 10. Be Filled with The Holy Spirit – The Holy spirit is the Spirit of Prayer.**