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How Should We Pray?

Matthew 6:7-15

Every person who repents of their sins and confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, comes into an intimate and eternal relationship with God the Father, who loves us unconditionally, without measure.

Prayer is way we communicate with God. God loves to hear the prayers of His children and to answer according to His eternal love, majesty, and grace.

Isaiah 65:24, "Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear."

Read Matthew 6:7-15... Our prayers to God should not be "meaningless repetition," like pagans [unbelievers] who babble on with many words; neither should our prayers be give in rote fashion [mechanical, mindless].

Nowhere in the NT is a prayer ever repeated or used in a ritualistic manner. We don't have to try and convince God of our needs; for He knows what they are, even before we ask Him!

Matthew 6:9a... Pray, then, in this way: The Lord's Prayer is given as a guide to how we should pray. There are six petitions in this prayer - three toward God's sovereignty: His Name, His Kingdom, His Will; and three toward our human needs: daily necessities, forgiveness, protection from evil.

Matthew 6:9b... Our Father who is in heaven: God is the Creator of all but the Father only of those who come through faith in Jesus Christ, into the Family of God, having been born of God's Spirit (**John 1:12-13**), "But as many as received Him [Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God,"

(**John 3:6-7**), "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

Matthew 6:9c... Hallowed be Your name: God is Holy and we are to revere, honor, worship, and glorify Him. We are to prayerfully acknowledge Him in every detail of our thoughts, our words, and our actions (**1Corinthians 10:31**), "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Matthew 6:10... Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven: Those who belong to Christ will want to express God's rule in their lives, as He already rules in heaven; for God's ultimate will is not being exhibited on earth, e.g., people sin, people die, and people go to hell; but ut God's will is for people to repent, believe, and live forever in heaven with Him.

1Timothy 2:3-4, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men [people] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

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2Peter 3:9, "The Lord is... ..patient toward you, not wanting any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

All true believers and followers of Christ, will seek to serve God, by knowing and doing His will.

Romans 12:1-2, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Colossians 3:17, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

We are to pray for God's will to be done, while seeking to obey God's Word.

Matthew 6:11... Give us this day our daily bread: Bread is symbolic of what we require for our physical and spiritual needs. In Palestine, bread was eaten at every meal, without it, you would be hungry.

In **John 6:51** Jesus says, "[He is] the living bread that came down from heaven," through which the Father grants us eternal life.

Philippians 4:19, "God will supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus," (**2Peter 1:2-3**), "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

The schedule for God's provision is daily, meaning, we need to come to Him daily for the provision of our needs, not weekly, monthly, or yearly, but daily, sometimes hourly, or even minute by minute, when in crisis.

Matthew 6:12... And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors: This is not talking about financial debts, it is talking about sin -- our spiritual debt to God, which was paid in full by Christ, for He is the once for all sacrifice, for all sin, for all people.

Sin separates man from God and is man's greatest enemy. Therefore, mankind's greatest need is forgiveness, and that is what God provides when we confess our sinfulness (**1John 1:8-10**), "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us our sins and purify us of all unrighteousness."

God is forgiving, and therefore, all of God's children, should be forgiving (**Ephesians 5:1**), "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children." The only

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physical form of God revealed to us is Jesus Christ (**Colossians 2:9**), "For in Him all the fullness of [God] dwells in bodily form," He is our example to follow.

On the cross Jesus said (**Luke 23:24**), "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." and so, Christians should exemplify the character of Christ in their lives (**Ephesians 4:32**), "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Matthew 6:13... And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil: [*For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen*] *This is not found in early MSS, but is recorded in the Scriptures (see **1Chronicles 29:11; Revelation 5:12-13; 7:12**).

This is speaking of trials and testing that can entice us to sin (**James 1:13-14**), "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

We should pray for God to place a guard over our eyes, ears, mouth, feet, hands, mind, and heart -- so that, we will not give in and do that which is sinful.

1Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

In prayer we ask God to strengthen us against sin, to help us know His will, and to obey His Word, in every situation of our life.

We live in a cursed world, evil is all around us, so we are commanded (**Romans 12:9**), to "Abhor [*hate, turn away from*] what is evil; cling to [*imitate, hold on to*] what is good.". Our flesh is weak and we are not equipped in our humanity to combat sin, or to defeat the devil's schemes, and so, we confess our need for the protection and provision that only God can give.

This sovereign lesson in prayer concludes with a reminder of how our forgiving others is an illustration and reflection of how the Father has forgiven us.

Matthew 6:14-15... For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses: Please don't misunderstand what this verse is saying. God has forever removed the penalty of sin from all true Christians (cf. **Romans 8:1**). However, sin does effect our present joy and our ability to serve God; therefore, we confess our sins in order to remain cleansed from sin's corruption, much like washing our face, hands, and feet when they have become soiled by dirt or contaminated in some way.

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Having been cleansed by God ourself, i.e., having received God's eternal forgiveness, we must forgive others; for an unforgiving spirit is inconsistent with one who has been forgiven by God (**Matthew 18:21-22**), Peter asked, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

Jesus then tells Peter a parable about a king who forgave one of his slave's very large debt, instead of throwing him in prison; but that slave later was unwilling to forgive a fellow slave's debt, that was much less than the debt he had been forgiven by the king, and he had him thrown into prison. When the king found out he called the unforgiving slave before him and said (**Matthew 18:32-33**), "You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?"

Why should we pray? Prayer allows us to draw close to God, to know Him more intimately (**Hebrews 4:16**), "Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need," (**1Thessalonians 5:17**), "Pray without ceasing [continually]; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

What should we pray? That God's will be done through every situation in our individual lives and in the Church of God; so that men, women and children (**Ephesians 3:18-20**), "may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."

How should we pray? Constantly and reverently, bringing our petitions and praises, sorrows and joys, concerns and considerations, before God.

Jeremiah 29:11-13, "For I know the plans that I have for you, 'declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."

Jeremiah 33:3, "Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know."

In **Genesis 18:22**, Abraham prayed standing; in **1Chronicles 17:16**, King David prayed sitting; in **Matthew 26:39**, Jesus prayed lying face down on the ground.

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Our physical position in prayer isn't important; but our attitude is, we are to revere God's holiness, recognizing our own sinfulness; for only then will we truly be thankful for His loving kindness, forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

Prayer is the means by which we come into and remain in God's presence, while separated from Him on earth.

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray for those things that bring glory and honor to God, as we exalt the character and nature of God (**Revelation 1:8**), "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." **17-18**, "I am the first and the last, and the living One; I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore."

God has revealed Himself to us, forgiven our sins and saved us, and He desires for us to live out our lives on earth, while trusting Him to bring us to heaven, where we will experience (**Revelation 21:3-6**), "Behold, the [dwelling] of God is among men, and He will [live] among them, and they shall be His people... and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; for the first things have passed away." He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new. ..." "It is done."

Pastor Mike

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