

DISCIPLESHIP HANDBOOK

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RESOURCES



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Lesson 4 | What is Prayer?

What is Prayer?

Prayer is a conversation with God. Speaking to Him and listening.

There are multiple examples in Scripture of people calling out to God for help, direction, relief from anxiety and fear. There are prayers of gratitude, praise and joy!

Prayer may be known as: petition, supplication, request, asking, plea...

When Should We Pray?

God created us for relationship with Him. He wants to hear from us in our everyday life about everyday things!

1 Thessalonians 5:17 - pray without ceasing

Philippians 4:6 - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Psalms 145:18 - The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

Psalms 102:17 - He shall regard the prayer of the destitute and shall not despise their prayer.

Is There a Right Way to Pray?

How do we pray? Jesus taught His disciples how to pray in Mathew 6:9-14. It doesn't mean we must say the exact words (although we can) but rather it is a good pattern in which to pray. Let's take a look:

Our Father in Heaven

Jesus starts with acknowledging who He is praying to - His Father! The Father to all who are followers of Jesus! Remember God is your Father.

Hallowed be they name

Hallowed means holy, revered, greatly revered and honoured. We have a great holy God and in prayer it's good for us to be reminded of that.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done

When we put God on the throne of our life, we are putting aside our will and agenda and start to follow God's ways and purposes. Jesus is saying, "not my, will but God's!" We should want God's will and purposes here on earth. His ways are good, loving and merciful.

Give us today our daily bread

We are reminded that it is good to ask for our daily needs from our good Father.

Forgive us our debts (also known as sins, trespasses)

We remember our own need for God through the forgiveness of our sins and that helps us to forgive others.

Lead us not into temptation

We all need God's help in walking with Him. Many things in our life can distract us, so asking for God's help with our temptations is wise.

**PRAYER IS SIMPLY A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION
BETWEEN YOU AND GOD - *BILLY GRAHAM***

But deliver us from the evil one

Just looking at the news and we know this world has evil in it. The enemy (Satan) is a real influence in our world; however, God is so much bigger than the enemy. Nothing goes on that the Father is shocked by or unaware of. Jesus defeated death, sin and Satan.

John 10:10 - The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Romans 16:20 - And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

For thine is the kingdom and the power forever. Amen.

This is a statement of praise and honouring our great God! Gratitude for all he has done.

When We Don't Know What To Pray

When we become a Christian, the Holy Spirit is given to us, as a Helper, comforter etc.

Ephesians 1:13-14 - In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Even when we don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit is often interceding with the Father on our behalf.

(Definition of interceding - intervening on behalf of another)

Romans 8:26-27 - 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 through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Why Has God Not Answered Yet?

Sometimes you will see God move right away. Other times in our faith it seems that God's not there at all.

The writer of the book of Psalms, King David, often spoke of God feeling far off; however, he waited, he cried out, and he stayed the course. And God rescued him throughout his life.

Psalms 13:1-2 - How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

The author waited patiently (no mention of length of time) Psalms 40:1-2 - I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.

However, God has given us promises to help us during those times and help us to remember to persevere in our faith.

God is always working in our situations, for our good, even though we often cannot see it at the time. In hindsight, we see God's hands even in our hardest moments.

Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Starting a Life of Prayer

Why not ask God for help to pray? His disciples asked him how to, why shouldn't we?!

Luke 11:1 - Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

Pray with a friend

- Pray for others - family, friends, co-workers – remember to pray for those we love and also for those who may have hurt us

Luke 6:27-28 - But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.

- When concerns arise, say a prayer to God - lift up that concern

James 5:13 - Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

James 5:16 - Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Prayer Journal

As we start praying it can be very powerful to record our requests to God, so when you look back months or years later, we can see God's hand throughout our lives. Sometimes in an immediate way, sometimes in gradual changes to our character.

Dig a Little Deeper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/>

Type in Prayer in the Desiring God search engine to get

helpful articles and teachings on prayer

Questions & Notes

Lesson 4

1. What have you learned about prayer from this lesson?

2. When is a good time to pray?

3. In Mathew 6:9-14, what things does Jesus teach us to consider first in prayer before our own needs?

