

THE BLESSING AND THE POWER OF PRAYER!

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4: 14-16

Prayer remains one of the mysteries of our faith: yet prayer is a simple act and a comfort to believers who from the beginning have turned with confidence and faith to God.

The mysteries are theoretical:

- *How can prayer change the mind of God or modify events?*
- *How does prayer relate to divine sovereignty?*

Scripture does not always attempt to answer these questions. Instead, the Bible emphasizes the simplicity of prayer. Believers are to pray about everything according to Philippians 4:6:

“Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

We must be confident that God hears our prayers, cares, and is able to act on our behalf.

Let’s look at some actual definitions of the word prayer in scripture.

PRAYER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

PALAL: (Heb.) translated, “to pray.”

- It is a call to God to assess a need presented and to act on it
- It speaks of the dependence and humility of the person praying
- It is an appeal for a divine decision

ATAR: (Heb.) translated, “to pray or to entreat”

- It stresses the earnestness of the person praying and the intensity with which the request is made
- It is sometimes associated with sacrifice

SA’AL (Heb.)

- To ask or to inquire: to ask someone for something

ANAH (Heb.) translated, “Hear Me”

- This is often used in a call or cry to God

Prayer in the Old Testament is an expression of personal relationship: a relationship initiated by God who is recognized as Creator and Redeemer. Knowing God as Creator, Redeemer and Covenant Giver was the basis of the relationship within which God’s Old Testament people approached Him in prayer. Prayer then, is the appeal of a child who recognizes his dependence. It is made to an all-powerful person who cares. Prayer is not a matter of ritual religion. It is a living, vital expression of relationship.

PRAYER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

PROSEUCHOMAI (Greek) translated “to pray or to entreat”

- It is used of prayer to God in general. In classical Greek, it was the technical term for calling on a deity.

AITEO (Greek)

- To ask for or to request
- It is expressing a desire or a want to other persons or to God

DEOMAI (Greek) translated “to ask, request or beseech”

- This word is used of specific spoken requests to God. The emphasis is on the existence of a need
- The individual who is speaking is deeply aware of a personal need, and out of the need comes a cry for specific help. It may be addressed to Jesus, and is often uttered in intercession for others.

EROTAO (Greek)

- To ask

ENTYNCHANO (Greek)

- To intercede

In the New Testament, each person of the Trinity is deeply involved in prayer. We come to the Father, through the Son, accompanied by the guidance of The Spirit. It is a continuous expression of the personal relationship that has been established with God through Jesus. The content of prayer grows out of our intimate relationship with others in the body of Christ.

John Wesley said:

“God does nothing but in answer to prayer” and backed up his conviction by devoting two hours daily to prayer. Prayer initiates us into our spiritual life. To pray is to change. God uses prayer to change us and to transform us. If you are unwilling to change then you will not pray.

In prayer, God’s thoughts become our thoughts. His desires become our desires His loves becomes our love. We begin to see things from His point of view. Prayer is learned and it grows out of the believer’s relationship with God. In prayer we are working with God to determine the future.

In incident after incident, the church has triumphed through prayer again and again.

BIBLE VERSES ON PRAYER

1 JOHN 5: 14-15

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of Him.”

PHILIPPIANS 4: 6-7

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

JAMES 5:16

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

ROMANS 8:26

“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.”

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.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

“Be joyful always: pray continually: give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

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.”

EXAMPLES OF PRAYER IN THE BIBLE**GENESIS 24:10-20**

Abraham’s servant prayed to God, and God directed him to the person who should be wife to his master’s son and heir.

JUDGES 15: 18-20

Samson prayed to God, and God showed him a well where he quenched his burning thirst, and so lived to judge Israel.

DANIEL 2:16-23

Daniel prayed, and God enabled him both to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream and to give the interpretation of it.

ACTS 4:31

The Church in trouble prayed and triumphed.

ACTS 12:1-12

The believers in Jerusalem prayed, and God opened the prison doors and set Peter free, when Herod ruled that he would die.

ACTS 13:2-3

Prayer and Fasting launched the ministry of the great Apostle Paul.

ACTS 14:23

Prayer and Fasting established Elders over new churches

Prayer is the practice of the presence of God. It is the place where pride is abandoned, hope is lifted and supplication is made. Prayer is the place of admitting our need, of adopting humility, and claiming dependence upon God. Prayer is the needful practice of the Christian. Prayer is the privilege of touching the heart of the Father through the Son of God, Jesus our Lord.

Prayer changes the one praying because in prayer, you are in the presence of God as you lay before Him your complete self in confession and dependence. There is nothing to hide when in quiet supplication: we find ourselves reaching into the deepest part of ourselves and admitting our needs and failures. In so doing, our hearts are quieted and pride is stripped and we enjoy the presence of God. James 4:8 says:

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

Prayer is doxology, praise, thanksgiving, confession, supplication and intercession to God.

Prayer is a cleansing process, washing our thoughts, feelings, motives, and will: purifying our entire being including the heart, thus enabling us to see God, for without purity no one can see God.

Prayer is not limited by words, but it is a touching of our spirit, with the Holy Spirit of God, that leads us into relationship with The Father. This means that we don't need to put into words, but we can simply open our heartfelt thoughts and emotions to God.

Prayer brings the power of God to bear on the situations that we are concerned about. Prayer builds my relationship with Christ. Prayer helps us to overcome temptation.

Prayer is strength, refreshment and joy.

Prayer is one of the ways God is able to work in our lives and in the lives of others. Prayer opens new possibilities. Prayer is not a one-way activity. God speaks, we listen, we speak and God listens to our hearts.

Prayer accomplishes God's work.

Prayer is a weapon of spiritual warfare.

TYPES OF PRAYER

One structure for prayer is given by the acronym **ACTS**, representing:

**ADORATION: CONFESSION: THANKSGIVING: AND SUPPLICATION
(or INTERCESSION)**

ADORATION

Is to adore God, to worship Him and to fulfill the commandment to love Him with all of our heart, mind and soul. As we spend time in adoration, we praise God for who He is. He is our Creator, our Sustainer and our Redeemer!

By starting a time of prayer with adoration and praise, we can focus on God first, rather than ourselves. We think of who He is and what He has done.

CONFESSION

Allows us to clear away the things in the relationship between God and us, which are displeasing to Him. All of us have sinned.

“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 and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1: 8-9

Confession is admitting to God the things that we have done wrong, and seeking forgiveness for them. When we come before God and say “I’m Sorry”, He always forgives us. God’s forgiveness is total and complete.

THANKSGIVING

We are taught from childhood to say “Thank You” when someone does something for us, or gives us a gift. We need to constantly thank God for His blessings to us: the things that God has done for us: and for the gifts that we have been given at His gracious Hand.

SUPPLICATION or INTERCESSION

This is when we come to ask God for our needs and the needs of others. Sometimes it can be difficult to know how to pray about our concerns. We have confidence that our Heavenly Father wants to hear about them all. Paul encourages us:

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayer and request. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

There are various reasons why we must intercede:

- Pray for Healing
- Pray for National and International Concerns
- Pray for The Church
- Pray for Others Who Are Known to Us
- Pray for Leaders
- Pray for Missions
- Pray for The Nations
- Pray for Jerusalem

You can begin your own list of prayer concerns that are close to your heart. Your prayer does and will make a difference.

SOME FINAL NOTES ON PRAYER

Prayer is a discipline. It should raise the discipline level of our whole life. Prayer will affect our sleep, exercise, recreation and our daily routine.

The gateway to God's presence is praise. Never pray without beginning and ending with thanksgiving, praise and worship.

Offer yourself to God in service. Offer Him your entire, consecrated life.

Pray with the Bible open before you. Meditate on The Word of God and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to shape your life in the form of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance.

Journal. Record your impressions, God-visitations and promises. Keep track of answered prayer.

Be consistent in prayer. Spend some time every day in prayer. Be persistent in praying for specific requests.

Establish a place of prayer in your home: a prayer room or a closet that will be used exclusively to meet God. Make that Holy ground.

If possible, go on a prayer retreat. Spend a day or a half-day with God in an extended period of prayer.

Prayer is an inexhaustible subject. Continue to press into the mysteries of Prayer and watch your life change before your eyes!

Reverend Joycelyn Barnett
Healing The Harvest Ministries