



## THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PRAYER

### WHY IS PRAYER SO DIFFICULT?

Prayer is one of the most talked about, but often, more difficult and less practised activities of our Christian walk. Yet, prayer is also one of the most important requirements of our relationship and walk with God. Here are some reasons why people find prayer difficult.

1. Many also do not know and understand the importance of prayer in the believer's life and the life of the world around them
2. Many people simply don't know how to pray. Many people are confused about what prayer is and what it involves.
3. People have their own pre-formed ideas about prayer – should it be formal or informal, loud or quiet, meditative or expressive, vocal or silent and intense or restrained, etc?
4. Temperament, experience, cultural background and lack of knowledge also create a lot of confusion about prayer, which discourages and deters people from praying.
5. Prayer is often regarded as a task, duty or chore that we do for God. This makes prayer tiresome and boring.
6. It is difficult to talk to someone you cannot see and who sometimes seems distant and unreal. Unfortunately, this is how many believers see God.
7. Many are not sure whether God answers prayer.
8. We have an enemy who would do anything and everything to discourage or prevent us from praying because he knows how important prayer is.

### WHAT IS PRAYER?

*Prayer is not...*

- Simply saying words and/or repeating formulae.
- Giving God a list of things we need or want done.
- A duty or chore we perform for God
- An OPTION.

*Prayer is...*

- Spending time in God's company and presence, talking and listening to Him.
- A two-way communication/interaction between Father God and His children, either privately or corporately, in order to express love, admiration or thanks, or in order to ask for something or know the Father's will and plans.
- A command that MUST be obeyed. God, through the scriptures, commands us to pray.
- Prayer is a DISCIPLINE



## RELATIONSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

- The basis of prayer is *relationship* and *responsibility*

The Disciples of Jesus saw Him model the discipline of prayer and asked Him to teach them also how to pray. He taught them what we now call the Lord's Prayer or Model Prayer. (*Luke 11:1-4 and/or Matthew 6:9-13*)

- From Jesus' teaching on prayer, we discover two key fundamentals of prayer.

### Relationship

Prayer is based on the relationship between us and God. He is our Father and we are His children (sons). Through the redemptive and reconciliatory work of Jesus Christ on the cross, God has adopted us into His family so we are now His children – sons of God. Therefore, as most children do, we must communicate with God, and He with us.

#### **Romans 8:15-16**

*"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..."*

- **Also read Galatians 4:4-7**

### Responsibility

We have a responsibility towards God and His kingdom because of our relationship with Him as children (sons) of God. Jesus Christ, the Son of God was committed to this and so He spent much time in prayer, and we must do the same.

#### **Luke 2:49**

*"And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"*

- **Also read John 5:36**

## GROUP DISCUSSION 1

1. Discuss the importance of communication in relationship.
2. What problems occur when there is a breakdown in or lack of communication between a PARENT and a CHILD or an EMPLOYER and an EMPLOYEE?
3. How does this apply to our relationship with Father God; what problems occur when there is a breakdown in or lack of communication (prayer) between us and Him?



**THE BASIS FOR PRAYER: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

- God is our Father and we are His children and sons. How Did God Become Our Father?

**1. Born Anew From Above**

We have been born anew from above. We have been born into God's family by the Word and Spirit. This new birth experience gives us the right/power to become children of God. We ARE God's children. – *John 1:12-13*

**2. The Father**

Out of His love for us, God the Father has made all who come to Him through Christ Jesus His children and sons. The Father has received and accepted us as His children. – *1 John 3:1-2*

**3. Jesus Christ affirms us**

Jesus Christ affirmed us as sons of God when He called us His brethren. Through His death and resurrection, Christ reconciled us with the Father and presented us to Him as His brethren, making God our Father, and us, joint-heirs with Christ – *Hebrews 2:10-13*

**4. The Holy Spirit also affirms, confirms and leads us**

As many as are led by the Spirit are the sons of God. Through Him, we have received adoption as sons and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. He is the seal of our adoption, and confirms, affirms and identifies us as sons of God in Christ Jesus. – *Romans 8:14-17*

**Why Does God Instruct Us To Pray?**

Prayer is not an option for the Christian because the bible instructs us to pray at all times. Prayer is the channel of communication between us and God. Communication is essential to the success of any relationship, therefore, prayer is essential to our relationship with Father God.

1. At the heart/core of prayer is God, His love for fallen humanity and His desire for relationship and fellowship with us. The command to pray is motivated and fuelled by love. – *Jeremiah 31:3*
2. God wants us to “call home,” talk to Him, get to know Him and understand Him as a Father, chat with Him, discuss issues with Him, confide in Him, ask Him for things, ask Him questions, listen to His answers, learn from Him and find out what He wants done. *Jeremiah 9:23-24*
3. God wants us to acknowledge Him so that He can direct our paths. When we don't pray, we ignore Him and assume control of our own lives. – *Proverbs 3:4-5*
4. It is in the place of prayer that we hear God's voice, discern and know His purposes, plans and will, and gain the strength to do it. – *Jeremiah 33:3; Colossians 1:9-11*
5. There are many things God will not do on earth, unless believers, God's children pray. We are God's agents to advance and establish His kingdom on earth. We have been given power and authority to do that, but we need to be in constant communication with Him in order to fulfil His will on earth. – *2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 62:6b-7; Romans 8:19*



**THE BASIS FOR PRAYER: OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD**

**John 4:34** – “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

Jesus’ responsibility on earth was to proclaim the Kingdom of God and give us access to it. Therefore, message of the Kingdom of God was the focus of Jesus’ Mission on earth, and the Kingdom of God must also be our Responsibility and focus.

- It was the theme and focus of His ministry on earth - *Matt 4:12-25*
- It was the focus of His sermon on the Mount - *Matt 5:3,10,19-20; Matt 6:10,33; Matt 7:21*
- It was the focus of His parables - *Matt 13:24,31,33,44,45,47*
- It was the focus of the assignment He gave when He sent out His 12 disciples – *Matt 10:1-8*
- It was the essence of the Great Commission - *Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-18*

**Understanding The Kingdom of God**

A kingdom is essentially a nation that has the following key components:

1. A king, supreme ruler, or governing agent – who reigns and has power, authority, supremacy and sovereignty
  2. Realm, territory, dominion or sphere, with its specific location and definite boundary lines
  3. Subjects or citizens within that territorial jurisdiction
  4. Laws and a form of government through which the king rules and his will is exercised.
- To have an effective prayer life, understand and fulfil our responsibility towards God and His Kingdom, we need four key revelations of the Kingdom of God:
    1. A revelation and knowledge of the King
    2. A revelation, knowledge and understanding of the kingdom - its scope and influence
    3. A revelation and knowledge of our relationship with the King (as sons) and our position and status in the kingdom (as citizens).
    4. A revelation and knowledge of the Rule of the Kingdom, that is, the King’s will, plan and purposes and the laws, rules and regulations that govern behaviour in His Kingdom.

**GROUP DISCUSSION TWO**

1. What is the Kingdom of God?
2. Where is the Kingdom of God?
3. What do you know about the King?
4. Who am I in the Kingdom?

**THE FOUR KEY REVELATIONS ABOUT THE KINGDOM**

*“Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” – Luke 17:20-21*

*“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 14:17*

▪ **Read Psalm 24**

**1) The King – Psalm 24:7-10**

a. The Identify of the King

When we confront powers, authorities, etc, they will demand to know, “Who is this King and by what authority does He reign?” What do you know about Him? What do you know about His kingdom?

**Jesus Christ is the King of Glory – King of kings and Lord of Lords – Revelation 19:16**

**Read:** Deut 10:17; Psalm 2; Daniel 7:9-14; 1 Tim 6:13-16; Rev 1:5; Rev 17:14; Rev 19:12

*“...until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power. Amen.” 1 Timothy 6:13-16*

This joint title “King of kings and Lord of Lords” refers only to the Lord Jesus Christ to indicate His power and absolute dominion over His entire realm, all creation. The rule of Jesus Christ is unique and above that of all other rulers. **He stands alone as King and Lord!**

b. The Character of the King:

What is His character? Can we trust Him and declare Him to others?

**Read:** Exodus 33:18-19, 34:5-7; Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

*He is gracious and full of compassion and good to all. He is slow to anger and great in mercy. He upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down. He opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. He is righteous and just in all His ways. He is kind and gracious in all His works. He is near to all who call upon Him. He preserves all who love Him....*

c. The Authority and Power of the King:

*“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” **Matthew 28:18***



- Jesus Christ, the King, is the LORD strong and mighty – He has all authority, power and might and dominion. He is the Lord who is mighty in battle. He is the supreme KING, the Conqueror, Victor, and Triumphant King!

## 2) Realm Of God's Kingdom – Psalm 24:1-2

The realm and territory of God's kingdom consists of:

- a. The whole earth – for the earth is the LORD's.
  - b. The fullness of the earth – everything in the earth. Everything God created – trees, mountains, animals, rivers, gold, silver, etc.
  - c. All the people who dwell on the earth
- **Read:** *1 Corinthians 10:26; Psalm 50:12; Psalm 2*

The realm of the kingdom of God, therefore, is the whole earth. It extends to every part of the earth and includes everything in and on the earth. Jesus Christ, the King owns the earth.

### ▪ **The Believer's Heart and Life**

Even though the territory of the kingdom is the whole earth, each believer's heart and life must be the place where King Jesus' throne is set, and from where He can reign and rule over the whole earth

#### **Psalm 110:1-3 (Easy to Read Version)**

*"The LORD said to my lord, "Sit at my right side, while I put your enemies under your control." The LORD will cause your kingdom to grow, beginning at Zion, until you rule the lands of your enemies! our people will gladly join you when you gather your army together..."*

- **Also Read:** *Psalm 2:6-8; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:8*

## 3) The Citizens Or Subjects Of The Kingdom – Psalm 24:5

These are the children of God, who have obtained righteousness in God through faith in Christ Jesus.

**John 1:12-13** – *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, 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."*

Citizenship is not by blood, nor the will of the flesh nor the will of man but of God. Those who believe in and receive Jesus Christ obtain the right to become children of God and citizens of His Kingdom.

- **All the citizens of the kingdom are, therefore, children of the king.** Citizenship is therefore not by gender, status or position, but by our right-standing with God in Christ Jesus
- **Also Read:** *Galatians 3:26-29*



#### 4) The Rule Of The Kingdom – Psalm 24:3-6

*“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. – Romans 14:17 **(This Is The Rule Of The Kingdom)***

The citizens of the kingdom must abide as true citizens and subjects, and live by the rules of the kingdom. God is not unapproachable or distant (*Hebrews 12:18-24*). However, there are rules that govern conduct, fellowship, relationship and worship.

*“And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” – Mark 12:30-31*

- **Matthew Chapters 5 to 7** – Jesus defined the kingdom lifestyles – rules, laws, etc that must govern our behaviour and conduct as citizens of the kingdom

They have cleanness of hand and heart – both our service and worship must come from a heart and life surrendered to the King in holiness, purity and sanctification. **This would be manifested in how we relate with others.** (Psalm 15)

They seek the King – to know Him, love Him, worship Him and live and walk by His Word, which is His rule (*Psalm 42:1; Jeremiah 29:13; Jeremiah 33:3*)

They seek God diligently – seek Him like Jacob who wrestled with God and men and prevailed. – *Genesis 32:23-28; Hosea 12:3-4*

- They follow the basic rule of the kingdom, that is, to walk in righteousness with God, and peace with others, and possess the joy of the Lord.

**Ultimately, the kingdom of God is Christ's reign, rule and authority on the earth and over all creation, as the triumphant Messiah and King.** (*Revelation 11:15; Isaiah 11; Matthew 10:7-8; Matthew 16:19; Luke 10:19; Matthew 4:23*)

Pursuing God's Kingdom agenda, therefore, is our responsibility as children of God.

- To know the King, to live in obedience to His word and Spirit, to know who we are and grow in His likeness, and to reach out to extend His influence in the territory of His Kingdom is the responsibility of every believer and child of God.
- This is why Prayer is not an option for us, but an essential part of our daily lives.

#### GROUP DISCUSSION THREE

1. Read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 (Luke 11:1-4)
2. What do you see in the Lord's Prayer about our relationship with God?
3. What do you see in the Lord's Prayer about our responsibility towards His Kingdom?



**LORD TEACH US TO PRAY  
LESSONS FROM THE LORD'S PRAYER**

- Matthew 6:9-13 (Luke 11:1-4)

**[1] “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name”**

*Relationship and responsibility*

- God is a spirit, beyond human understanding and dwells in heaven and in mystery. Yet, He is our Father. By addressing Him as Father, we are *acknowledging* our relationship with Him.
- We must also *recognize* God’s *being* and *nature*, that He is holy, and so we show reverence and honour to Him by praising and worshipping Him for Who He is.

This creates a healthy balance in how we approach Father God. Addressing Him as Father rids us of fear or dread as we approach Him, whilst acknowledging His holiness prevents us from getting familiar, presumptuous or disrespectful towards Him.

**[2] “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”**

Building and establishing the Kingdom of God on earth is God's foremost business. That was why Jesus came. Through Him, God’s kingdom has come on earth, so that what exists in heaven may be represented, duplicated or manifested here on earth. – *Romans 14:17; Revelation 11:15*

*Relationship and Responsibility*

- As children of God, we are also citizens of His Kingdom
- We must, therefore, make the pursuit of God’s kingdom an essential and fundamental part of prayer. We are to pray for God’s kingdom – **righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost** – to be established on earth as it is in heaven. *Romans 14:17*
- God’s kingdom and will must be established, first of all, in the life of the believer. Therefore, we are to surrender to God and pray for Christ to rule and reign in our lives.
- We are to pray for God’s will in our lives, families, communities, nations and the whole world. We must also pray God’s will for kings, rulers, leaders and people in authority, that there might be peace. – *1 Tim 2:1-4*
- We are to also pray for the unsaved, that they will hear the gospel and saved.
- We must pray for the Holy Spirit to empower us as we share the good news of the kingdom, and demonstrate the kingdom to all, as instructed by the Great Commission – *Luke 9:1, 10:9*

*“The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.” – Isaiah 32:17*

Read: *Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 11:5,12; Matthew 24:14; Mark 1:14-15;  
Luke 9:1-2, 10:1,9-11, 12:31-32; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Revelation 11:15*



**[3] “Give us this day our daily bread”**

*Relationship and Responsibility*

- God is our Father. He is our Provider, who sustains us on a daily basis. As our Father, God is responsible for all our needs – physical, human and spiritual. As our Father, God sustains us on a daily basis.
- Therefore, we can ask with the boldness and confidence of children. He has promised that when we ask, we will receive and He will not withhold any good thing from us.
- So, we acknowledge all our needs (physical, material and spiritual) before God. He has promised that when we ask, we will receive.
- We can therefore pray for our own needs and the needs of those around us – the poor, needy and destitute. And pray that God enables us to help them
- Read: Psalm 37:25; Matthew 7:7-11; John 21:4-6; Phil 4:19; Luke 11:10; 2 Corinth 9:6-15

**[4] “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”**

*Relationship and Responsibility*

- We are to acknowledge our sins, repent and ask for forgiveness, applying the cleansing Blood of Jesus to our sins.
- However, God’s forgiveness of our sins is linked to our forgiveness of others. Therefore, we must purpose to walk in forgiveness towards everyone, and ask God to help and enable us to do this.
- How we relate with others is an important part of our Christian walk. - *Psalm 15*
- To walk in forgiveness requires unconditional love, which is one of the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore, we need to pray and allow Him to work and form His nature of love in us.
- We also pray and repent on behalf of others, especially, the nation. (*2 Chronicles 6*)
- We also pray concerning the things which are unrighteous and wrong within our communities and seek ways by which we can rectify them.
- Read: Matt 6:14; 1 Corinth 13; Galatians 5:22-25; Hebrews 4:14-16; 2 Chron 7:14; 2 Chron 6

**[5] “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”**

*Relationship and Responsibility*

- We cannot live victorious, overcoming Christian lives without prayer. To be able to overcome sin and the temptations and trials we face daily, we need to go into our prayer closets.
- As our Father, God challenges us to deal with the works of the flesh. This is because, our conduct and lifestyle must be above reproach. It is our responsibility, therefore, to bring our weaknesses to God and deal with the issues of the flesh in prayer.



- God has given us His Word and the Holy Spirit to help and guide us. We must live in obedience to the Word and Spirit of God, and ask for His help to resist temptation and walk in righteousness and purity.
- As our Father, is our Protector. He protects and delivers us from the plans, schemes and plotting of the enemy, and from every form of evil that comes our way. – *Psalm 103 (the benefits of the Lord)*.
- Life is full of many battles and trials and we daily face temptation and testing and God has supplied us with an armour and weapons to fight with. So we need to pray for God to help us to use them.
- We also pray for protection for our communities, towns, cities and the nation. We pray for our schools, hospitals, the emergency services, etc.
- **Read:** *Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10-3-5; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 4:14-16; James 1:12-16*

### [6] “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”

#### *Relationship and responsibility*

- All the things we are desiring to receive and possess from God, that is, the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, belong to God.
- **The Kingdom:** The Kingdom belongs to God – righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility, therefore, to extol and declare the glories of our God and King and of His Kingdom. This is the essence of the Great Commission – to tell ALL about the goodness of our King and of His Kingdom

Praise, worship and thanksgiving are acts of faith and trust in God, our Father. Indeed, we know He has heard and will answer us. He is faithful.

Through praise and worship we affirm our relationship with God and show our confidence in Him as our Father and God. We give glory, praise and honour and acknowledge that all power and dominion belongs to Him.

- **The Power:** The source of all power is God, and His power is accessed through prayer! *“The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]”* (James 5:16b). A deficiency of earnest prayer produces a deficit of power in our lives and the church!

Prayer connects us to the Source of power. Many lack the power, but if we connect to God in prayer, His power will be manifested in healings, deliverances and salvation.

- **The Glory:** The glory also belongs to God. The glory of God of God is His nature, character and essence, as revealed to Moses in Exodus 34.

This is what the people out there will see, as we pray effectively, and turn to God.

- Amen is the seal of faith and assurance in a good, faithful, able and willing God and Father. ( )
- *John 11:40-42; Luke 1:37-38; Psalms 8; Dan 7:13-14; Rom 8:15-16; Gal 4:4-; Rev 5:13-14,7:12, 11:15, 19:1.*



### IMPACTING OUR NATIONS

We cannot impact our communities, unless we pray and pray fervently. God will not do many things in our lives and on earth if we do not pray. Therefore, if we want to change our communities, nations and the world, we must come before God in 'passionate, penetrating and persistent' prayer. This gives God *full* control, as we acknowledge His sovereignty. He then steps in and releases power to enable us to reach our communities.

#### **Habakkuk 2:14**

*"For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea."*