

Bible Study on Prayer

By Mary L. Dubler

Outline

I. Understanding Who calls us to prayer:

1. The Father
2. The Son

II. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray.

III. Why do we pray?

1. To thank and give praise to God
2. For healing
3. To encourage others
4. For wisdom
5. For help
6. For salvation
7. For forgiveness
8. For protection
9. For spiritual understanding
10. For deliverance from demons
11. To resist temptation
12. For our enemies
13. For the nations
14. For our authorities
15. For God's will
16. For Faith
17. To get my heart right with God

IV. How to pray and how not to pray.

V. How to pray—ways to pray.

1. Praying in the Spirit (Prayer Language)
2. Prayer and the laying on of hands or anointing with oil in the name of the Lord
3. Prayer as worship
4. Prayer with fasting
5. Being quiet before the Lord

VI. Understanding God's answers.

1. When God answers "Yes"
2. When God answers "No"
3. When God is silent for a time or when the answer includes a long wait

VII. How God reveals the answers.

1. Directly hearing His voice
2. Dreams and visions
3. Miracles
4. Angelic visitations
5. Through our authorities
6. Through His word
7. Through fellow believers
8. Through the opening and closing of doors

Understanding of Who calls us to prayer: The Father

Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you did not know. Jeremiah 33:3 (NASU)

Before beginning this study, please ask your husband or a person in authority over you (such as the pastor or an elder) to pray for you that through the work of the Holy Spirit the lessons of scripture will be revealed to you.

Read the following passages:

I Samuel 2:1-10

Jonah 2:1-9

Psalm 5

Luke 1:46-55

1. What attributes and characteristics of the Father are revealed in these prayers?

2. Why is it important to understand the character of God when you pray?

Read Matthew 7:7-11 and Luke 11:1-13

1. From these passages, what can you say about our relationship to God?

2. How does God respond to us when we pray?

How has God answered one of your prayers this week?

Understanding of Who calls us to prayer: The Son

The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry.

Psalm 34:15 (NASU)

Read the following passages:

John 14:11-14

Hebrews 7:11-28

1. Based on these passages, why is Jesus such an important piece of the prayer puzzle?
2. What is the ultimate goal of prayer?

Read the following passages:

Matthew 6:5-15; 14:23

Mark 14:35-36

Luke 5:16; 6:12; 22:39-46

1. Through Jesus' example, how are we to conduct ourselves in prayer?
2. Why should we pray even though "...your Father knows what you need before you ask him?" (Matthew 6:8b)

Read Luke 18:1-8

1. What does this parable tell us about prayer?

How has God answered one of your prayers this week?

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words....

Romans 8:26 (NASU)

Read the following passages:

Matthew 3:11, 16-17

Luke 11:13

John 14:16-20, 26-29; 20:21-22

Acts 2:1-4

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

2. Based on these passages it is apparent that there are two “stages” that a believer encounters with the Holy Spirit. What are they?

Read the following passages:

Isaiah 11:2-3

Romans 8:26-27

I Corinthians 14:14-15

Ephesians 6:18

1. How does the Holy Spirit help us pray?

2. What does it mean to “pray at all times in the Spirit?”

3. Why is speaking in tongues and important “tool” when we pray?

Why do we pray?

*There are probably others that I have not thought of, so if you can add to the list, great!
The scriptures are examples and not an exhaustive list.*

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| 1. To Thank and Praise God
I Kings 8:23-24
Matthew 6:9 | 11. To Resist Temptation
Mark 14:37-38
Luke 21:34-36 |
| 2. For Healing
Numbers 12:5-15
James 5:13-16 | 12. For Our Enemies
Matthew 5:43-45
Luke 6:27-28 |
| 3. To Encourage Others
Philemon 4-6
III John 1:2-4 | 13. For the Nations
Psalm 122:6-9
Jeremiah 29:4-7 |
| 4. For Wisdom
Proverbs 2:3-6
James 1:5-8 | 14. For Our Authorities
Ezra 6:9-10
I Timothy 2:1-4 |
| 5. For Help
Nehemiah 1:11
Acts 12:5-16 | 15. For God's Will
Mark 14:35-39
Colossians 4:2-4 |
| 6. For Salvation
Romans 10:1, 9-13 | 16. For Faith
Mark 9:14-24
Luke 22:31-32 |
| 7. For Forgiveness
Numbers 14:19
Nehemiah 1:5-6 | 17. To Get My Heart Right
With God
Psalm 66:18
Acts 3:19 |
| 8. For Protection
II Kings 19:15-19
Psalm 59 | |
| 9. For Spiritual Understanding
Ephesians 1:18-19
Colossians 1:9-10 | |
| 10. For Deliverance from Demons
Matthew 17:14-21
Acts 16:16-19 | |

**As you explore these, write down
your impressions.**

How to Pray and How Not to Pray

“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
Matthew 6:9 (NASU)

Read the following passages:

I Samuel 12:19-25

Matthew 6:1-15; 19:13-15

Mark 11:22-26

Luke 18:9-14

I Corinthians 11:3-15 (think about this in the context of authority)

II Timothy 1:3-4

From these passages complete the following chart:

How to Pray

How Not to Pray

How has God answered one of your prayers this week?

How to Pray—Ways to Pray, Part 1

Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray ...
Matthew 19:13a (NASU)

I. Praying in the Spirit (Prayer Language)

Read the following passages:

I Corinthians 14:14-15

Ephesians 6:18

Jude 17-25

1. When we speak in our prayer language, we speak “mysteries” (I Cor. 14:2). Typically a mystery is upsetting to us; why can we be at peace regarding our prayer language?

II. Prayer with the Laying on of Hands or Anointing with Oil in the Name of the Lord

Matthew 19:13-15

Acts 9:10-19; 13:1-4

Mark 6:7-13; 16:14-20

James 5:13-18

1. What is the result of the laying on of hands?

2. Why do you suppose we are directed in Scripture to call for the elders to pray *and* anoint with oil when we are sick? What is the importance of praying “in the name of the Lord?”

III. Prayer as Worship

Read the following passages:

Psalms 28 & 66

1. What is your definition of worship?

2. Why is prayer an important form of worship?

How to Pray—Ways to Pray, Part 2

So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. Daniel 9:3-4 (NASU)

IV. Pray With Fasting

Read the following passages:

II Samuel 12:15b-23

Daniel 9:1-6

Nehemiah 1:1-11

Matthew 17:14-21

Psalm 35:13

Acts 13:1-3; 14:21-23

1. What is the purpose of fasting, and why is it so frequently paired with prayer?
2. Often the Holy Spirit speaks during times of fasting. Why might fasting make it easier for us to hear God speak?
3. In II Samuel is recorded the story of David fasting and praying to God for the life of his son, and yet the son dies. What does this experience tell you about fasting, prayer, and the way God answers prayer?

V. Being Quiet Before the Lord

Read the following scriptures:

Numbers 9:6-14

Psalm 130

Psalm 62:5-8

Psalm 119:147

1. What does it mean for your soul to “wait for the Lord,” or to “wait in silence?”
2. When we are listening for God, how can we know that what we hear is from Him?

Understanding God's Answers

In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch.
Psalm 5:3 (NASU)

I. When God Answers "Yes"

Read the following passages:

Genesis 25:19-26

2 Chronicles 20:1-17

Acts 10:1-33

1. In the account of Isaac and Rebekah there are actually two answers to prayer, a "yes" and an answer to "Why?" How do you feel about asking God "Why?"

2. List all the steps involved in Cornelius receiving the answer to his prayer.

II. When God Answers "No"

2 Samuel 12:15b-23

Matthew 26:36-46

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

1. Describe how David, the Lord Jesus, and Paul show us the ways to respond to "no" answers.

III. When God is Silent for a Time, or When the Answer Includes a Long Wait

Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17:15-19; 21:1-5

Acts 12:1-17

1. How long did Abraham have to wait for Isaac to be born? What does the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac reveal to you about God's character?

2. The story of Peter shows us that God is never late. How should we respond when the answer does not seem to be coming?

How God Reveals the Answers, Part 1

...while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.
Daniel 9:21 (NASU)

I. Directly hearing His voice

Exodus 34:5-10
1 Kings 9:1-5
Jonah 4:1-4

II. Dreams & Visions

Judges 7:9-14
1 Kings 3:5-15
Acts 9:10-19; 11:1-18

III. Miracles

1 Kings 18:30-40
2 Kings 6:15-19
Acts 16:25-30

IV. Angelic Visitations

Daniel 9:20-23
Luke 1:8-17
Acts 10:30-33

1. What do you glean from the examples of God speaking directly in response to prayer?

2. Looking at the examples of miracles, what “powers” were being fought? How did God show Himself to be powerful? What prevents you from asking for a miracle?

3. Sometimes dreams are very clear as to their meaning, and sometimes they require interpretation or other information to be understood. Why do you think God makes some dreams more difficult to understand? Do all dreams have a spiritual meaning?

4. Why might God choose to send an angel in response to prayer?

How God Reveals the Answers, Part 2

...praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ.... Colossians 4:3

V. Through Our Authorities

1 Samuel 1:9-20

Nehemiah 2:1-8

VI. Through the Word

Deuteronomy 17:18-20

Acts 8:26-39

VII. Through Fellow Believers

Jeremiah 42:1-22

Ezra 10:1-4

VIII. Through the Opening & Closing of Doors

Genesis 32:9-23; 33:1-11

Acts 16:6-12

Colossians 4:1-4

1. In the above scriptures, what authority figures did God use to convey answers to prayer? Who are the authority figures in your life? Do you believe that God will use them to deliver answers to your prayers?

2. When the Ethiopian eunuch went to Jerusalem to worship, what might have been the subject of his prayers? How was the Word used to answer his prayer?

3. In Ezra 10:1-4 we see an example of God relaying a plan of action, encouragement and exhortation through a “messenger.” God also frequently used prophets to deliver answers to prayer. How could you determine whether a prophet is false?

4. When you see a closed door in response to a prayer you have made, what is your approach to that door? Do you try to force it open? How would Jesus instruct us to respond to a door that has been closed?

The ultimate goal of prayer: that God be glorified

In Isaiah Chapters 36 & 37 we read a very interesting account of king Hezekiah and his prayer regarding the king of Assyria who had come to attack him. We will focus on Hezekiah's prayer that is found in Isaiah 37:16-20:

16 "O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17 " Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent them to reproach the living God. 18 "Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated all the countries and their lands, 19 and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. 20 "Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God." Isaiah 37:16-20 (NASU)

Hezekiah acknowledges God for Who He is, and outlines the problem. Then he states what should be the ultimate goal of all our prayers and the answers we receive: “. . . *that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God.*”

Our heart attitude should be that we pray in such a way that God gets the glory and that other people will be able to see Him through the answers to prayer.

So, pray in that way and eagerly watch how God answers.

May the Lord reveal His power, love, and other aspects of His character to you in greater and greater ways as you pray.