

"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet". Luke 10:38-39

At the Feet of Jesus A Guide for Personal Prayer

*"The meaning of prayer is that we get hold of God, not so much the answer".
(Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest)*

Lord, Teach me to Pray (using ACTS)

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray'..." (Luke 11:1)

Just like the disciples, most of us know prayer is important but when it comes to actually praying we might feel uncomfortable, inadequate and wonder, "where do I start?" This booklet is intended to be a guide or aid to help you get started so that you can then develop your own personal prayer life that is most comfortable to you.

Oswald Chamber says, "*Prayer is the exercise of drawing on the grace of God. Don't say, I will endure this situation until I can get away to pray. Pray NOW; draw on the grace of God in the moment of need.*"

Prayer is simply communication with God. It is a gift God has given us to build and cultivate a relationship with Him. Like any relationship it takes time, commitment and at times, perseverance. Personal Prayer is a two-way dialog, talking to God and listening to God. God is our heavenly Father and He longs for us to know Him intimately. Just as a parent desires to hear from his child, God desires to hear from us. And the truth of the matter is, we need to hear from Him too.

"Pray Continually!" - 1Thessalonians 5:17

Getting started is sometimes the hardest part of establishing a regular personal prayer life or habit. But how in the world do we pray continually? This scripture tells us that prayer is more than words. It is an attitude and willingness of heart to connect and stay connected to God. We do not have to "have our acts together" to call out to or talk to God. Prayer starts with a desire to discover more about a God who is close to us rather than "out there" somewhere. The more we practice prayer, the more we begin to experience God in a deeper way. He becomes as Jesus called him, our Abba or Daddy.

The following concepts in this prayer guide are intended merely to help you develop your own personal prayer life. There are no magic formulas or perfect steps to a successful prayer life for everyone to follow. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. It is best to find a consistent time of day and comfortable, quiet place conducive to your time alone with God. Get a Bible and note pad along with your guide, then ask God to open your heart and mind as you begin to pray.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." 1 John 5:14

Begin by offering your prayer time to God:

Almighty and gracious Father, I humbly come into your presence this day and offer my prayer time to you. Guide me Lord by your Holy Spirit. Prompt me in my heart and mind in those areas of my life where you desire me to have a greater revelation of you. I place all my worries, circumstances and busyness aside now and ask you to help me focus completely on you. Draw me closer precious Jesus and order my steps according your perfect plan for my life. Amen

Praise, Adoration, and Worship

"It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night." Ps. 92:1-2

Praise, adoration and worship are how we respond to God's holiness, His attributes and His total sovereignty. Praise takes our focus off ourselves and our circumstances and places it completely on God. As we praise, we find ourselves immediately in His presence. As you praise and worship God in your prayer time today, acknowledge God for who He is in your life and current situations. Focus on His character and holiness.

(Suggested Bible helps-read: Ps. 100, 145:3-7, 19, 63, 84, 103, 48:10, 57:9-10)

Some attributes and character of God: Faithful, abounding in love, all-knowing, all-powerful, always present, awesome, beautiful, blameless, pure, trustworthy, compassionate, blessed, exalted, forgiving, gentle, full of grace, sovereign, holy, just, merciful, victorious, sufficient, protector, provider, healer, good, kind, living, majestic, perfect, peaceful, patient, radiant, righteous, slow to anger, understanding, unfailing love, wise, supreme, strong, wonderful, worthy of praise, shepherd, deliverer, redeemer, Most High God, the way, truth, light, Savior, Creator, promise-keeper....(list your own)

Prayer: (sample of praise)

O Most Holy Lord and Father I praise and worship you today because of your unfailing love for me. You are always faithful, trustworthy, slow to anger, and merciful. My heart rejoices in your amazing compassion and patience. You are my deliverer and I can trust you to get me through all circumstances in my life. Your power is greater than what is in the world and no matter what I encounter you will make your good come out of it. I praise you as my light, my hope and my salvation. (write your prayer)

Confession

"Create in me a pure heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." Ps. 51:10-12.

It has been said that Satan reminds you of your sin to make you feel shame and guilt, but God convicts your heart of sin to bring you to repentance and reconciled to Him. One is based on destruction and the other is based on love. Confession is about God's grace, not guilt. But in order to experience forgiveness we must first admit we have done wrong. Confession is agreeing with God's truth and recognizing that we are not following God's will. *1 John 1:8-9 says, "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."*

(Suggested Bible helps – read: Ps. 51:1-4,10,12; Prov. 28:13; Lam. 3:22-25; Heb: 4:16; Js. 5:16)

Prayer: (sample of confession)

Lord, I confess I do not always see the right path before me. All too often I decide for myself what I think is best without a thought of you. I act in ways that are wrong, I treat others without respect or regard to their feelings, and I am too consumed with myself to bother about the needs of those around me. I am stressed out because I have not been abiding in you. I am worried and anxious because I have not been trusting in you. I humbly confess my sin of:

(selfishness; unforgiveness – towards myself or others; greed; acting unkindness to _____; pride; arrogance; impatience; foul language; resentment or hostility towards _____; belittling others; lack of prayer or faith; uncontrolled anger towards _____; lust; laziness; jealousy or envy; impure thoughts and wrong thinking; neglecting God; neglecting my family and loved ones; being judgmental; addictions – alcohol, drugs, food, sexual, shopping; name your personal confessions)

Have mercy on me Lord for I do what I do not want to do and do not do what I ought to do. I need you Lord Jesus to help me walk in a manner pleasing to you and be a light and reflection of your love and grace. Thank you that you died on the cross for my sin yesterday, today and tomorrow. Thank you that when I confess my sin you are faithful and just to forgive me and in your love extend your grace so that I am free to live as a new creation. Cleanse me now and make me holy, as You are holy. Amen

Thanksgiving

*"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father".
James 1:17*

We are taught to say thank you at a very early age, but somehow it slips our minds when it comes to thanking God. How many of us wake up in the morning and say, "Thank you Father for this new day. Help me live it for you." ? When God answers prayer do we even realize He has answered them and stop to thank Him immediately? Our relationship with God can only grow as we begin to have a heart of gratitude for what God has done for us. 1 Thess. 5:18 reminds to *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* We can show our thanks to God for who He is to us, as well as what He has done and is doing for us. Be alert and think on ways to express your gratitude every day to God.

(Suggested Bible helps – read: Ps. 136:1,6,23-24, 26; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; Col. 3:1-2,17; Ps. 28:7; Ps. 107:1; 1 Chron. 29:12-13; Ps. 30:11-12; Ps. 75:1; Ps. 116:16-17; Ps. 105:1)

Prayer (sample for Thanksgiving)

*Thank you, Lord for hearing my prayers. It is amazing to me that before I speak you are already at work to answer them. Thank you for your great mercies for they are new each morning. Great is your faithfulness O Lord. How wonderful it is to be your child and to experience your abundant love and grace. Thank you for your daily provision for me and for my family. Thank you for teaching me and showing me your ways through your Word, worship, my church family and others. Thank you for all you have created and most of all thank you for your son, Jesus, who has given me life through His blood that was shed for me. You are my shield and strength and my heart trusts in you. Glory to your name.
Amen*

Your prayer of Thanksgiving

I love the Lord because he hears and answers my prayers. Because he bends down and listens, I will pray as long as I have breath." Ps. 116:1-2

Petition and Intercession (Supplication)

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Matt. 7:7

Petition and intercession are "asking" prayers. (Intercession will be discussed in the next concept.) Generally, petition is when we ask God to help us personally. It is not selfish to pray for ourselves, especially as it relates to intimacy with God. Remember, prayer is about our relationship with a living, loving heavenly Father, rather than the answers we receive from our prayers. Jesus prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread." In other words, He was saying to ask God to meet your daily needs. We have many needs and concerns in our lives and God desires us to bring them all to Him first.

(Suggested Bible helps – read: 1 John 14:15; Ps 25:1-2, 4-5, Matt. 7:7; Luke 21:36; John 14:14; John 15:7; John 16:24; 1 Chron. 4:10; Neh. 1:11; Psalms)

Prayer: (Sample for petition)

Almighty and loving Father, thank you that your Word tells me if I call out to you, you will answer me. I can cast my cares on you because you care for me (1 Pet. 5:7). Lord, I know you do not want me to be anxious about anything but in all things pray with thanksgiving presenting my requests to you (Phil. 4:6). There are so many things I do not understand, but you are a loving God who has deep compassion for your people.

I am struggling with: _____

(my job; finance; my marriage; raising my children; my health; change in circumstances; depression; desperation; helplessness; self-esteem; value; not feeling needed; overwhelmed; unhappiness; grief or loss of dreams and goals not coming true; being single; unrest, chaos, confusion; wisdom in all my decisions; direction; other....).

Father, help me turn these concerns over to you and trust you to work them out. Make me acutely sensitive to your Holy Spirit so that I will know when and when not to act, when and when not to speak, and what your will is for my life. Show me and teach me your ways Lord. Guide me in your truth for you are my Savior and my hope is in you (Ps. 25:4-5). Help me be still and wait for your leading (Ps. 37:7). Daily, I will trust in you with all my heart and not depend on my own understanding. I will acknowledge you in all my ways so that you will direct my path (Prov. 3:5-6). Thank for being a God who is able to work all things together for good according to your great purpose (Rom. 8:28). It is in the name, power and authority of Jesus I pray. Amen

Intercession

"Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed". (James 5:16) "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you". (Matt. 5:44)

Like petition, intercessory prayer is "asking" prayer. When we pray for others we are interceding on their behalf. As with any prayer, we must realize that we are not the power, the answer, or the reason prayers are answered. Jesus is. It is important and wise to ask God to help us pray from His perspective and not our own. We do not know the whole picture and to pray out of our sympathy for someone instead of God's will for their lives is not always what is best. (Matt. 16:22-23). It is hard to watch others go through struggles but sometimes asking God to remove them from the struggle is not necessarily going to help them grow closer to God.

1 John 5:14-15 says to ask anything, in accordance with the "**will** of God". How do we know the will of God? In Bill Hybels' book "Too Busy Not to Pray", he shares some ways we can know if we are praying God's will.

- Are we praying in accordance with God's Word? What does scripture say?
- Would this bring glory to God?
- Would it advance His kingdom?
- Would it help people and is it loving according to God's point of view?
- Would it help me and/or others to grow spiritually?

When we do not know how to pray we have help.

"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. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." Rom. 8:26-27

(Suggested Bible helps in praying for others – 2 Chron. 7:14; John 17; Daniel 9:4-23; 2 Tim. 2:1-7; Eph. 2:17-19, 6:18; Phil. 1:6, 9-10; Jer. 29:11-14; 2 Peter 1:5-8

Praying for others: (Sample prayer for my family)

Almighty and merciful Father, I come with reverence and humility before your holy throne on behalf of my family (names). Give to each member of my family the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they may know you better. I pray also that the eyes of their hearts may be enlightened in order that they may know the hope to which You have called them, the glorious inheritance in the saints, and the incomparably great power in Christ Jesus available for each believer (Eph 2:17-19). Lord, help my family members (names) add to their faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to

godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love so they will always be effective witnesses for you (2 Pet. 2:5-8). Father I ask that you will command your angels to guard my family in all their ways so that they will not fear but learn to trust in you (Ps. 91). Father, thank you that when your word goes out it will not return empty but will accomplish and achieve the purpose for which you sent it (Is. 55:11). Thank you for keeping my family in the palm of your righteous hand. In Jesus Name. Amen

Those we can pray for: Family (spouse, children, and other family members); friends; pastors and church leadership; co-workers; neighborhood; community; city; state; country; world; all in authority including local and national government; schools; missionaries; others _____

Your intercessory prayers:

Gracious and loving Lord I ask for prayers for _____

_____.



Helps in contemplative prayer/meditation:

Choose a passage of scripture that you would like to meditate on, perhaps in Psalms or one of the Gospels. As you read ask God to speak to you through His Word, to show you His nature/character more clearly, to reveal areas of your life that need change and to give you greater understanding of His Word. Be thoughtful about what you read. Stop when something seems to “pop” out; re-read that passage or verse again. Listen for God to speak a new thought or idea through what you have read. Stay in prayer asking God to reveal more understanding to you. If nothing further comes to you, keep reading or finish your meditation with thanksgiving.

(Bible helps with meditation: Ps. 139; Ps. 51; Ps. 8; Ps 121; Ps. 23; Gospels of John and Luke; Paul’s letters: Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians)

Suggested Books on Prayer

Prayer – Find the Heart's True Home – Richard Foster

Too Busy Not to Pray – Bill Hybels

Praying God's Word – Beth Moore

The Power of Praying Together – Stormie O'Martian and Jack Hayford

The Power of a Praying Wife – Stormie O'Martian

The Power of a Praying Parent – Stormie O'Martian

Listening for God – Marilyn Hontz

Personal Prayer Journal

Personal Prayer Journal