

Prayer

The Blessing of Communication with God

- Introduction
 - Two-Way Communication with God
 - ✦ God communicates with mankind through the creation itself [Psalm 19:1; Rom 1:20] and His Word [John 1:18; 14:6-9; 15:15; Heb 1:1-2; 1 Cor 2:16].
 - ✦ Prayer is the mechanism God has ordained for mankind to communicate with Him [Ps 50:14-15; 91:15; 116:1-2; Jer 33:3].
 - Prayer in the Application of Faith-Rest
 - ✦ Believers can experience the blessing of resting in the Lord if they, by faith, claim the promises of God found in the Scriptures.
 - ✦ Prayer is an integral part of faith-rest as we are instructed to express our concerns to God in prayer [Phil 4:6-7; 1 Pet 5:6-7].
- The Disciples' Prayer
 - Jesus Taught His Disciples How to Pray
 - ✦ To God the Father [Matt 6:9a] (see also Eph 5:20; 1 Pet 1:17)
 - ✦ In a spirit of reverence [Matt 6:9b] (see also Ps 2:11; 5:7; 119:38)
 - ✦ In view of His A to Ω plan [Matt 6:10a] (see also Job 42:2)
 - ✦ Humbly acknowledging His sovereign will [Matt 6:10b] (see also Acts 18:20-21; 1 Cor 16:7)
 - ✦ Asking for necessary spiritual nourishment [Matt 6:11] (see also 1 Cor 10:1-4)
 - ✦ Asking for forgiveness [Matt 6:12] (see also 2 Sam 24:10)
 - ✦ Asking for protection from evil [Matt 6:13a] (see also Jn 17:15; 2 Th 3:3; 2 Tim 4:18)
- Principles of Prayer
 - Five Aspects of Prayer
 - ✦ Confession (private) [1 Jn 1:6-10; Ps 32:1-5; 51:1-10; Pr 28:9, 13]
 - ✦ Thanksgiving [Psalm 30:4; 95:2; 100:4; Eph 5:20; Col 3:17]
 - ✦ Praise [Psalm 34:1; 145:1-3; 150:1-6; Heb 13:15]
 - ✦ Intercession [1 Sam 12:23; Eph 6:18; 1 Tim 2:1-2]
 - ✦ Petition for needs [Heb 4:16; 1 John 5:14-15]
 - The Believer's Prayer Life
 - ✦ Should be devoted [Acts 1:14; 2:42; Col 4:2]
 - ✦ Should be consistent [Rom 12:12; Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17]

- ✦ Should be in the Spirit [Rom 8:26-27; Eph 6:18; Jude 20]
- ✦ Should be according to the will of God [1 John 5:14]
- ✦ Should never be for show [Mark 12:40]
- ✦ Should be in faith, without any doubting [James 1:5-8]
- ✦ Should be with proper motives [James 4:3]
- ✦ Should be with a clear mind [1 Cor 14:14-15; 1 Pet 4:7]
- ✦ Should be pleasing to the Lord [Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8; 8:3-4]
- ✦ Should be joyful [Psalm 95:1-2; Phil 1:4]
- Answers to Prayer
 - ✦ Petition denied, desire denied [Pr 1:28-29; Jas 1:6-8; 4:3]
 - ✦ Petition denied, desire granted [Gen 17:18-21; 18:20-32]
 - ✦ Petition granted, desire denied [Num 11:13, 18-20, Ps 106:15]
 - ✦ Petition granted, desire granted [1 Kgs 18:20-39]
 - ✦ God's responses to prayer are from a position of omniscience, knowing all the details and what is best in every situation.
 - ✦ Sometimes His answers are obvious, but other times, they are quite subtle.
 - ✦ As we grow in the faith and understand how God answers prayers, we are better able to recognize His answers.
 - ✦ Example: Prayer for someone who is physically ill.
 - The desire is for that person to be healed, healthy and happy.
 - God may allow the illness to persist, using the opportunity to help the sick person focus on Him and grow spiritually.
 - If God eventually does bring about physical healing (in His timing), that person will have more capacity for true joy [Psalm 16:11].
- Additional Thoughts on Prayer
 - Through Jesus Christ, we have been given the incredible blessing of being able to enter confidently before the Throne of Grace and pray directly to God [Mk 15:37-38; He 4:16].
 - We should expect that God will answer our prayers if we ask for what is good in His sight [Matt 7:7-11], praying to the Father in the name of the Son [John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23].
 - However, if we are walking in sin, God will not hear our prayers [Ps 66:18; Job 35:12-13; Micah 3:4; Isa 1:15; 59:1-3].
 - Corporate prayer is a powerful ministry, multiplying the prayers of the saints [Mt 18:19-20; Acts 12:5, 12; 20:36; 21:5].
 - Finally, our prayers should include our leaders, both governmental [1 Tim 2:1-2] and spiritual [Rom 15:30-32; Col 4:3-4; 2 Th 3:1-2].

- More Prayer Passages
 - Abraham's prayer [Gen 20:3-18].
 - Isaac's prayer for Rebekah [Gen 25:21].
 - Moses' prayers [Exod 33:12-14; 34:8-9; Num 14:11-21; Deut 3:21-28; 9:11-29].
 - Hannah's prayers [1 Sam 1:1-2:11].
 - Samuel's prayers [1 Sam 7:5-10; 8:4-9; 12:12-25].
 - David's prayers [1 Sam 23:10-13; 2 Sam 7:18-29; 15:30-31].
 - Solomon's prayer of dedication [1 Kgs 8:22-53].
 - The man of God's prayer for Jeroboam [1 Kgs 13:1-6].
 - Elijah's prayers [1 Kgs 17:17-24; 18:20-46; Jas 5:17-18].
 - Elisha's prayers [2 Kgs 4:32-27; 6:8-23].
 - Hezekiah's prayers [2 Kgs 19:10-20; 20:1-6; 2 Chr 30:13-20].
 - Manasseh's prayer [2 Chr 33:10-13].
 - Ezra's prayer [Ezra 9:1-10:1].
 - Nehemiah's prayers [Neh 1:1-2:8].
 - Daniel's prayers [Dan 6:3-14; 9:1-27].
 - Jonah's prayers [Jonah 2:1-10; 3:1-4:4].
 - Jesus' prayers [Matt 14:23; 26:36-44; Luke 3:21-22; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28-29; 22:31-32; John 17:1-26].
 - The disciples' prayers [Acts 1:24-26; 4:23-31; 6:2-6].
 - Peter's prayers [Acts 9:36-42; 11:4-9].
 - Cornelius' prayer [Acts 10:1-8; 30-33].
 - Paul's prayers [Acts 22:17-21; 28:7-9; Rom 10:1; 2 Cor 13:7-9; Eph 1:18-21; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12; 2 Thess 1:11-12; Phlm 4-6].
 - John's prayer [3 John 2].

- Types of Psalms
 - Hymns (Songs of Praise)
 - ✦ Generally, contain three elements...
 - A call to praise God
 - Reasons for praising God
 - Another call to praise God
 - ✦ Individual (Psalm 8) or Community (Psalm 115)
 - Laments
 - ✦ Written from a position of distress
 - ✦ Almost all laments include...
 - Cry to God, complaint about a painful situation
 - Petition to God for help
 - Promise of sacrifice to God in thanksgiving for help received
 - ✦ Some laments also include...
 - Confession of sin
 - Assertion of innocence
 - Imprecation (cursing)
 - ✦ Individual (Psalm 13) or Community (Psalm 44).
 - Thanksgiving
 - ✦ Generally, include...
 - Praise to God for His salvation
 - Description of situation requiring God's salvation
 - Confession that it was God who saved
 - More praise and thanksgiving
 - ✦ Individual (Psalm 34) or Community (Psalm 67)
 - Confidence
 - ✦ Almost all include...
 - Assurance that God will save even though deliverance has not yet been experienced
 - Confidence that God will hear and answer prayer
 - ✦ Individual (Psalm 11) or Community (Psalm 125)

- Wisdom
 - ✦ Purpose: To instruct the people of the Law of God
 - ✦ Typically contain...
 - Praise for right conduct and condemnation of evil conduct
 - Assurance that obedience to God's word brings blessing
 - ✦ Examples: Psalm 1, 37, 49, 73 and most of Psalm 119
- Prophetic
 - ✦ Purpose: To convey an oracle of God
 - ✦ Rather than a prayer to God, God is the speaker
 - ✦ Examples: Psalm 50 and Psalm 81
 - ✦ Others (e.g. Psalm 75) contain an oracle, but may be categorized as another type
- Remembrance
 - ✦ Look back to the past, focusing on God's acts of redemption
 - ✦ In a lament, God's past redemption brings hope (Psalm 77)
 - ✦ In a hymn of praise, God's past redemption is cause for celebration (Psalm 114)
 - ✦ Others detail God's intervention in history (Psalm 136)
- Royal
 - ✦ Praise the king as God's representative on the earth
 - ✦ May celebrate the victories that God has brought to His people through the king
 - ✦ Examples: Psalm 21, 132
- Pilgrimage
 - ✦ Sung by pilgrims as they came to Jerusalem for one of the annual festivals
 - ✦ Many fall under other categories, but Psalm 84 and Psalm 122 are purely pilgrimage psalms