THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER



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Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides for ever.
I John2:15-17

This Messianic Bible Study on prayer is in ten different categories.

I. THE DEFINITION OF PRAYER

In order to develop a definition of prayer, we will discuss this point in five areas.

A. The Words Used

There are several different Hebrew and Greek words used concerning prayer. We need to look at these one by one and try to differentiate between them; this way we will have a better concept of what prayer is about.

1. The Hebrew Words

Altogether, there are three different Hebrew words.

a. Tphilah and Hitpaliel

The first Hebrew word has two forms: *tphilah*, which is the noun; and *hitpaleil*, which is the verb (I Kg. 8:23). This is a word that simply means, "to pray" in the verb form, or "prayer" in the noun form. The Hebrew root means "to intervene," "to interpose," "to intercede." When one intervenes between God and man; or interposes between God and man; or intercedes between God and man, he is praying.

b. Techinah and Hitchanein

The second Hebrew word also has two forms: *techinah* is the noun; *hitchanein* is the verbal form (I Kg. 9:3). As a verb, it means, "to supplicate"; as a noun. it means; "supplication." The Hebrew root

means "to show favor" or "to be gracious." In its intense form, it means "to seek or to implore favor." When we supplicate and try to obtain favor or obtain grace, we are praying.

c. Challah

The third Hebrew word is *challah*, which means, "to entreat the favor of" (I Kg. 13:9). And when we entreat the favor of God, we are praying.

2. The Greek Words

The Greek language has a total of seven different words that emphasize prayer.

a. Eschomai, Proseochamai and Proscuchei

The first Greek word has three different forms: *eschomai, proseochamai* and *proscuchei*. This is the word that is used in the New Testament for prayer to God in general. Literally, the word means, "to ask for something". When we ask God for something, we are praying. This is your general, common, everyday Greek word for praying to God.

b. Deomai and Desisis

The second Greek word has two forms: *deomai* or *desisis* (I Thes. 3:10). This word carries the idea of asking for something but with a more specific request.

c. Aiteo and Aiteima

The third Greek word also has two forms: *aiteo* and *aiteima* (Jas. 1:5). This word means "to ask" or "to request." When we ask something of God or request something of God, we are praying.

d. Erotao and Eroteisis

The fourth Greek word also has two forms: *erotao* and *eroteisis*. This word also means "to request" or "to ask" for something. Again, when we request something of God, or we ask something of God, we are praying.

e. Eutugchano and Uperentugcheo

The fifth Greek word also has two different forms: *eutugchano* and *uperentugcheo* (Rom. 8:27-28). It means "to intercede" or "to petition." When we intercede between God and man, when we make a petition of God, we are praying.

f. Parakaleo and Parakaleisis

The sixth Greek word also has two forms: *parakaleo* and *parakaleisis* (II Cor. 12:8). This Greek word means "to comfort," "to exhort," "to request," "to entreat" or "to appeal." And when we try to comfort, or exhort, or request, or entreat, or to appeal in a relationship to God, we are praying. This is the same used word for one of the names of the Holy Spirit: the *Paraclete* or the Comforter.

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g. Iketeiria

The seventh Greek word is *iketeiria*, which means "supplication" or "request" (Heb. 5:7).

B. The Definition

First, by way of definition, prayer is human speech addressed to God. A second facet is that prayer is asking something of God. Thirdly, prayer is conversing with God; we are carrying on a conversation with Him.

From this definition, we can draw a clear distinction between Bible study and prayer. When we study the Bible, God speaks to us. But when we pray, we are speaking to God. This is as good a definition as we can derive from the three Hebrew words and the seven Greek words.

C. The Presuppositions of Prayer

Based on these Hebrew and Greek usages and based upon our definition, there are seven presuppositions we make when we pray.

First, we presuppose that God is a personality so that we can have an I and You relationship with Him.

A second presupposition is the imminence of God. The imminence of God tells us that God is near so He can hear our prayers.

A third presupposition is the omnipresence of God. God is everywhere so when I am praying in America and a believer is praying in Israel, God can hear both of us and see both of us.

A fourth presupposition is the sovereignty of God. We really believe that He has control of His Creation. He controls both persons and events; both persons and things. Because we believe He is sovereign, we make these requests of God.

Fifth, we also presuppose the omniscience of God; that He knows everything and knows how best to answer our prayers.

Sixth, we presuppose the omnipotence of God; that He is all-powerful.

Seventh, we presuppose the promises of God; that He promised He will listen.

D. The Nature of Prayer

Concerning the nature of prayer, let me mention six things.

First, prayer is an act. Prayer is not merely an attitude, though an attitude is involved; it is an act. Prayer should be an integral part of our lives (I Thes. 5:17). So each day the believer should be conversing with God because prayer is an act.

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Secondly, prayer is an act of position (Lk. 11:1-13). We have a position with God if we pray to Him.

Thirdly, prayer is an act of a specific petition.

Fourthly, prayer is an act of an urgent petition.

Fifth, prayer is an act of an emotional petition.

Sixth, prayer is an act of a filial petition in that we have a father-son relationship.

E. The Object of Faith

Faith is the first foundation of our prayer life; we have faith in God as God.

II Timothy 1:12 states: *I know whom I have believed.*

Psalm 18:31 teaches: *who is a rock, besides our God.*

Psalm 46:1 declares: *God is our refuge and strength.*

Habakkuk 3:18 affirms: *I will rejoice in Jehovah.* The implication is that God must be trusted regardless of how things come out. The believer cannot demand that God answer his prayer exactly his way.

II. THE SYMBOL OF PRAYER

A. In the Old Testament

The symbol of prayer is incense; the burning of incense. In the Old Testament this is taught in Psalm 141:2: *Let my prayer be set forth as incense before you; The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*
One of the rituals in the Tabernacle was the burning of incense and it was to symbolize the prayers of the saints.

B. In the New Testament

This is picked up by the New Testament as well. Revelation 5:8 states: *And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*
John wrote that in this vision he saw the twenty-four elders each having *golden bowls of incense*, which he interpreted to represent *the prayers of the saints.*

Later, in Revelation 8:3 John wrote: *And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

This angel was given a bowl carrying *much incense* and this is poured out onto *the golden altar*: this represents *the prayers of ... the saints*. The smoke of the incense was the prayers of the saints, which went up with God.

Summary: From the fact that incense was the symbol of prayer in the Book of Psalms and Revelation, two observations or conclusions can be drawn. First, the purpose of the altar of incense was to be a sweet-smelling savor to the Lord. Secondly, this reveals how God views the prayers of the saints; they are a sweet-smelling savor to the Lord.

III. THE REASONS AND PURPOSE FOR PRAYER

Altogether, there are eight specific reasons and purposes for prayer.

A. Prayer Is a Command

First, prayer is not an option; for the believer, prayer is a command. In I Samuel 12:23 we are taught that not praying for others is sin. If we are failing to pray for others, for those that God has burdened us with, we are sinning. We are commanded to pray.

In I Thessalonians 5:17, we are told to: *pray without ceasing* and in Colossians 4:2, we are to: *Continue steadfastly in prayer.*

B. Prayer Is Right and Proper

Secondly, prayer is right and proper. This is the point of Luke 18:1: *And he spoke a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint.*
Yeshua (Jesus) told a parable to encourage people to continue praying because praying is both right and proper.

C. God Bestows Gifts and Blessings Through Prayer

Thirdly, prayer is a medium through which God bestows His gifts and blessings (Dan. 9:3; Mat. 7:7-11; 21:22; Jas. 1:5).

D. Prayer Is Essential to Victory

Fourthly, prayer is essential to victory. This comes out rather clearly in Ephesians 6:10-18, the famous passage on the spiritual warfare. He is primarily dealing with the pieces of the armor, which is largely the Word of God. Three times He tells us that by means of this armor, we will be able to resist or stand against the Devil.

But then after dealing with the various pieces of the armor in the spiritual warfare, he states in Ephesians 6:18: *with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*
The secret ingredient for victory in the spiritual warfare is prayer; thus, prayer is essential to victory.

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E. Prayer Is the Example of the Messiah

A fifth reason for praying is to follow the example of the Messiah. He is our greatest example; He is the one that we are to follow, and we are to follow Him in prayer as well. Jesus prayed frequently (Mk. 1:35; Heb. 5:7).

F. Prayer Is the Example of the Early Church

A sixth reason for praying is to follow the example of the early Church. The early Church was characterized by prayer (Acts 6:4; 12:5). We need to follow the examples of the early Church.

G. Prayer Is a Channel of Deliverance

A seventh reason for praying is that prayer is a channel of deliverance; by means of prayer, God is delivering us. We see this in eight different ways: first, we are delivered from temptation by means of prayer (Mat. 26:41); second, we are delivered from discouragement by prayer (Lk. 18:1); third, we are delivered from adverse circumstances by prayer (Acts 12:3-19); fourth, we are delivered from ignorance or lack of wisdom by prayer (Col. 1:9; Jas. 1:5); fifth, we are delivered from physical sickness and death by means of prayer when God so chooses (Acts 28:8; Jas. 5:13-17); sixth, we are delivered from needs by means of prayer (Jas. 4:7); seventh, we are delivered from unbelievers by means of prayer (Rom. 15:30-33); and eighth, we are delivered from Satan by means of our prayer (Eph. 6:18).

So, prayer is a channel of deliverance that we need to consistently use. That is another reason why we need to pray.

H. Prayer Is the Channel for Spiritual Maturity

The eighth reason for praying is that prayer is also the channel for spiritual maturity; it is the means by which God brings us to maturity. This is seen in five different ways: first, it is the means by which we fight the spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18); second, it is the means to spiritual growth (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Col. 1:9-14); third, it is by means of prayer that we develop spiritual boldness (Acts 4:19-21; Eph. 6:18-19); fourth, by means of prayer we obtain the salvation of the lost (Rom. 10:1); and, fifth, by means of prayer we do the work of world evangelism (Mat. 9:37-38).

IV. THE ADMONITIONS TO PRAYER

There are eight key passages of Scripture that give admonitions to pray.

A. Luke:18:1-8

This passage has three parts to it. The first part is in verse 1 in which He deals with the principle He wished to develop.

And he spoke a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint.

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The point is that He wants them to pray, and men *ought always to pray and not to faint*. The word *always* means, "praying in every situation and circumstance." We should have a willingness to pray in every situation and in every circumstance. The word *faint* means "to be disheartened," and the point is that prayer will keep one from being disheartened. That is why a person should pray in every situation and in every circumstance.

Secondly, in verses 2-5, He gave the parable: *saying, There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.*
The point of the parable is this: the judge was indifferent in rendering justice, however, because of persistence of the woman, he finally gave in.

The third part of the passage, verses 6-8, gives the application:
And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge said. And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is longsuffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?
The point of the application is to teach persistence in prayer. Unlike the judge, God is not indifferent. And, if a judge who is indifferent will finally respond to persistence, how much more will God who is not indifferent. God will respond to persistent prayer. One should keep on asking in spite of delay. The purpose of persistence is not to make God more willing; God is always willing. The purpose of persistence is to teach us faith and to increase our faith; to change our attitude towards prayer; to teach us to "hang in there" with persistent prayer.

B. Romans 12:12

The second passage is Romans 12:12: *rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer.*
We are to continue *steadfastly in prayer*. That is what is going to cause us to rejoice *in hope* and give us patience *in tribulation.*

C. Colossians 4:2

The third passage is Colossians 4:2: *Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving.*
We are to: *Continue steadfastly in prayer*. We are to give strength to or to be devoted in prayer. We are to be energetic in prayer.

D. I Thessalonians 5:17

The fourth passage is I Thessalonians 5:17: *pray without ceasing.*

This verse does not mean that we just continually pray and never stop. The Greek word used here is a word used outside the New Testament

of a hacking cough. When you have a hacking cough, you do not cough all the time but you feel like coughing all the time. That is what it means to pray without ceasing. It does not mean to pray without stopping. It does not mean that we continuously pray. But we should have an attitude of prayer all the time.

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E. I Thessalonians 5:25

The fifth admonition to pray is in I Thessalonians 5:25: *Brethren, pray for us.*

We should not only pray for ourselves; we should be praying for others as well.

F. I Timothy 2:8

The sixth admonition is in I Timothy 2:8: *I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing.*

Wherever we are, we should have the same attitude of prayer. There is something wrong when we feel more like praying inside the building of a church than we do at home, or on the street, or on a subway, or on a plane. Keep in mind, there were no church buildings in the first century when these words were written. Therefore, we should have an equal desire to pray regardless of where we may be.

G. Philippians 4:6b

The seventh passage is Philippians 4:6b: *but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

The point of this admonition is that we should be in a constant mental state of praying; being able to continue praying without any concerns about disruptions or whatever. In *everything*, we should be praying. Concerning *everything*, we should supplicate, make our requests known to God, and this should be done with thanksgiving.

Paul tells us we are to: *let your requests be made known unto God* in three ways: first, by prayer, which is approaching God with our lips; second, by supplication, which are specific requests; and, third, with thanksgiving, thanking God for how He will answer our prayer. Not by assuming He is going to answer our prayer the way we want it answered but thankful for whichever way He chooses to answer that prayer.

H. Psalm 32:6

The eighth passage is Psalm 32:6: *let every one that is godly pray unto you in a time when you may be found.*

The point is an admonition to pray at a time that God may be found; and, since God can always be found, we should always be praying.

V. THE PROMISES OF PRAYER

God has made certain specific promises concerning prayer. In order to get a comprehensive picture of how God views prayer, we will look at fifteen passages.

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A. Exodus 22:22-24

The first passage is Exodus 22:22-24, which states that God will hear the cry of the widow and will avenge her. Under the Mosaic Law, the widow was under special protection from Him. God took the violation of a widow's rights very seriously. If a widow's rights were violated and she cried to God, He will hear her cry and will avenge her.

B. Deuteronomy 4:7

The second passage is Deuteronomy 4:7, which states that God will be near to Israel when she calls upon Him. Israel will stray; but whenever she will call upon God, He will always be near enough to hear.

C. II Chronicles 7:12-18

The third promise is in II Chronicles 7:12-18 states that if the Jewish people will turn to God, He *will heal their land*. These verses are often taken out of context here in the United States. Many people apply this Scripture to the United States; that if all the believers get together and really pray and repent, God will heal the land. God made no such promise to any other people or to any other land than the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. "A text apart from its context is a pretext." And this promise is specifically directed to the Jewish people and the land is specifically the Land of Israel.

D. Job 22:27

The fourth passage is Job 22:27, which states that if one prays to God, God will hear him. He is anxious to hear our prayer.

E. Job 33:26

The fifth passage is Job 33:26, which states that if one prays to God, God will be favorable to him. God wants to hear our prayers. Not only will He hear our prayers, He will begin showing favor to those who have a consistent prayer life.

F. Psalm 50:14-15

The sixth passage is Psalm 50:14-15, which states: *Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; And pay your vows unto the Most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.*
In both Testaments, praying is viewed as a *sacrifice*. One of the ways that we sacrifice to God is by praying to Him. We are to offer our prayer of sacrifices or prayers of thanksgiving especially when we are in a situation that is hard to handle; at that point we are to resort to prayer.

G. Psalm 65:2

The seventh passage is Psalm 65:2 which says: *Oh you that hearest prayer*. Again, the promise is made that God will hear our prayers. If He is going to hear our prayers, we should be characterized by going to Him and praying to Him.

H. Psalm 86:5-7

The eighth passage is Psalm 86:5-7. Verse 5 says that God is always

ready to forgive.

In verses 6-7, the psalmist says: *Give ear, O Jehovah, unto my prayer; And hearken unto the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon you; For you will answer me.*
Here the psalmist applies the truth of the previous Psalm. The promise in Psalm 65:2 is that God will hear prayer. Because God is ready to forgive, the psalmist now turns to God in prayer and he asks God to *give ear* to his *prayer* and *supplications*. He is fully assured that as he calls upon God in his day of trouble, God will answer him.

I. Psalm 102:17

The ninth passage is Psalm 102:17, which says that God regards the prayer of the destitute. He does not despise their prayer. Those who are destitute and approach God, He has a special regard for them, and He will not despise their prayer because of their economic status.

J. Proverbs 15:8

The tenth passage is in Proverbs 15:8: *the prayer of the upright is his delight.* God delights when the righteous ones on this earth are praying. When His believers are praying to Him, God takes delight in these prayers.

K. Proverbs 15:29

The eleventh passage, Proverbs 15:29, says: God *hears the prayer of the righteous.*
The righteous are not those who are "sinlessly perfect." If any of us had to be sinlessly perfect in order to pray, we would never be able to pray. The *righteous* ones on this earth are those who have been made righteous by the application of God's righteousness through our faith. God promises that those of us who have turned to Him in faith will have our prayers heard.

L. Luke 11:13

The twelfth passage is Luke 11:13, which says that God will give the Holy Spirit to those who will ask. In the Old Testament, the giving of the Holy Spirit was not automatic to one who believed. This statement of Luke 11:13 took place still in the Dispensation of Law and not the Dispensation of Grace. Under the Law, not every believer was given the Holy Spirit; and even those that did have the Holy Spirit did not necessarily have the Spirit permanently. So David's prayer in Psalm 51:11: *Cast me not away from your presence; And take not your holy Spirit from me was a valid*, Old Testament prayer. But it is not a valid, New Testament prayer. Believers living in the gospel period were still under the old dispensation when the giving of the Spirit was not automatic. God will give the Holy Spirit to those believers who will ask Him. So we do not need to pray this prayer today; the moment we believe we receive the Holy Spirit.

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M. John 4:10

The thirteenth passage is John 4:10, which says that God will give eternal life to those who ask. To ask God is to pray to Him. When we pray to God and ask Him for eternal life, He will give it to us. But we need to meet the condition; which is to pray in faith. In this case, the faith that saves requires us to believe that Yeshua died for our sins; was buried; and rose again.

N. John 9:31

The fourteenth passage is John 9:31, which says that if a man be a worshipper of God, He hears him. If we are worshipping God, if we are in awe of His divinity, if we worship God through all of His attributes, God will hear us.

O. James 1:5-7

The fifteenth passage is James 1:5-7. Verse 5a says: *But if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally.*
If you are confronted with a decision, do not pray for signs, do not pray for opened or closed doors, do not pray for these kinds of specific manifestations which God, for the most part, chooses not to give anymore. We are admonished to make the choice on the basis of divine wisdom. Do not pray for specific signs, but do pray for wisdom in making the proper choice.

VI. THE OUTLINE OF PRAYER

This prayer is usually referred to as the "Lord's Prayer" and is recited every week in many different churches. However, this was not what was intended by the Messiah when He gave this prayer. It was intended to be an outline so that we can categorize our prayers because, while on the one hand, our prayer was not to be prescribed, on the other hand, it was not to be haphazard either. The balance is to have an outline by which we organize our prayer life.
We will discuss the outline of prayer in four parts.

A. Scripture

There are two main Scriptures on this outline prayer.
The first is Matthew 6:9-13: *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who are in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*
The second passage is Luke 11:2-4: *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.*

B. The Petitions

The principle He intended comes out in both Gospel accounts.

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Matthew said: *after this manner pray ye*. Luke said: *when ye pray, say.* It is clear from Matthew 6:7 that it was not intended to be a ritual formula for prescribed prayer. Because if this was intended to be a ritual formula, if it was intended to be repeated week in and week out, it would move into the *vain repetitions* of Matthew 6:7.

Right after Jesus said do not use *vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do*, He then proceeded to give us an outline, not statements to be repeated. Yet, that which Yeshua said do not, people have done with this outline prayer. But again, the purpose of this so-called Lord's Prayer was not intended to be a ritual formula for prescribed prayer, but it was intended to serve as an outline for a model prayer. So He said: *after this manner* [or in this way]; that is the emphasis.

In the context of Luke 11:1, the disciples did not ask Jesus, "Lord teach us a prayer." The disciples came to Him and said: *Lord teach us to pray*. The reason they did not know how to pray is because, by this time in Jewish history, prayers in Judaism were prescribed just like in many churches today. Prescribed prayer militates against Scripture. Prescribed prayer is *vain repetitions.* By this time, Judaism had degenerated to being a religion of prescribed prayer just like Gentile religions.

So the disciples knew how to read many prayers; they knew how to recite the many prayers they had memorized, but they did not know how to pray extemporaneously. The question they raised is how do we pray extemporaneously. This so-called Lord's prayer is never prayed in the Book of Acts. It is never prayed in the Epistles. Both Acts and the Epistles record prayers but this is not one of them.

C. The Petitions

There are a total of six petitions in this outline prayer. Three of these have to do with God and His glory; and, three are related to man and his needs.

D. The Outline Itself

1. The Invocation

The outline has six parts to it. The first part of the outline is the addressee. We are to address our prayers to God the Father. The Matthew account states: *Our Father who are in heaven*. The Luke account is simply: *Father*. There is never any basis for addressing our prayers either to the Son or to the Holy Spirit. All of our prayers must be addressed to God the Father. In both versions of this prayer, all of the pronouns are plural. This shows that when we pray, we pray as a community, the Body of the Messiah. This is the invocation.

When we begin our prayer, we do so with an invocation by addressing our prayer to God the Father. And remember, that all prayer is predicated on a right relationship to God the Father, so if we are in fellowship with God the Father, we can approach Him. If we are out

of fellowship with God the Father, then we cannot approach Him. Addressing our prayer to the Father as Father emphasizes the family relationship we have with God the Father.

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2. To Sanctify God

The second part of the outline is to sanctify God. The Matthew account says: *hallowed be your name*. The Luke account also says: *hallowed be your name*. It means, "cause your name to be hallowed"; "cause your name to be sanctified"; "cause your name to be set apart." God's name stands for His nature. His nature means all that He is. To sanctify God means to set God apart; God's name is to be revered.

It is a time to meditate on the attributes of God and their relationship to the believer. It is a good time to study a book on the attributes of God and make a list of these and see how each attribute applies to us. In this we are sanctifying God; we are setting God apart.

3. Concerning the Kingdom Program

The third part of the outline concerns the Kingdom program. The Matthew account says: *Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.* The Luke account says simply: *Your kingdom come*. In this part of our prayer we pray for God's purposes in history to be accomplished and completed. This is the time to pray for the salvation of others. This is the time to pray for the salvation of Israel. This is the time to pray, "even so *come*, [quickly] *Lord Jesus*"; it is a time to pray for the Rapture; to pray for the Second Coming. It also means a personal submission to God's authority to His plan and His program.

4. Concerning Personal Petitions

The fourth part of the outline is to pray for our daily needs. The Matthew account says, *Give us this day our daily bread*. At this point we issue petitions of personal concern. We pray for our immediate needs; for our food bill; our rent; our mortgage payments; whatever those needs may be.

5. Concerning Forgiveness of Sin

The fifth part of the outline has to do with the forgiveness of sin. The Matthew account says: *forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*. The Luke account says: *forgive us our sins for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us*.

The word debts here refer to the moral aspects of the Law of Moses. So when we sin, we incur an obligation upon ourselves. We must dispense with this debt by confessing our sins (I Jn. 1:9). As we forgive others, we have fellowship-forgiveness from God. Fellowship-forgiveness from God is predetermined by our forgiving the brethren (Mat. 6:14-15; 18:35).

6. Concerning Spiritual Warfare

Sixth, we pray concerning the spiritual warfare. The Matthew account says: *bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*. Luke

simply says: *bring us not into temptation*. This is not a petition to be kept from testing, but a petition to keep us from yielding. This is a petition to keep us from evil in general and *the evil one* in particular. Our obligation is to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation (Mat. 26:41).

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VII. THE PLACES OF PRAYER

The Bible does not emphasize any particular place of prayer. The emphasis of Scripture is on seclusion.

In Matthew 6:6 Yeshua said: *But you, when you pray, enter into your inner chamber, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret shall recompense you.*
From this verse, we get the basic biblical principle about the proper place to pray: the principle of seclusion.

In the Scriptures, people prayed in a variety of places. For example, Daniel prayed in a private home (Dan. 6:10). In Matthew 6:6 Jesus, said to pray in *the inner chamber*. In Matthew 14:23, He went to *the mountain* to pray; but, in Mark 1:35, He went into the desert to pray. In Acts 12:5, 12, they prayed in a private home. In Acts 16:13 and 16, they prayed by a *river side*. In Acts 21:5, they prayed on the *beach*. In I Timothy 2:8, we are told that we should pray *in every place*.

So there is no mandatory place of prayer in Scripture because the Scriptures encourage us to always be in continuous, constant, readiness state of mind to pray. We should be able to pray prayers wherever we are: outside, inside, in a car, in a home, on a plane, on a train, or just walking down the street. The Bible allows us to pray in any particular place, anywhere we happen to be.

VIII. THE TIMES OF PRAYER

We have already seen that there is no special place for prayer; we should be able to pray in any situation. But what are the proper times of prayer. There are eight things worth noting.

A. Various Times

First, the Bible teaches that we should be praying at various times. For example, Psalm 55:17 mentions *evening, morning,* and *noonday.* Daniel prayed *three times a day* (Dan. 6:10). I Timothy 5:5 speaks about continuing *in supplication and prayers night and day*. Luke 18:1 teaches: [men] *ought always to pray.*

There is a common concept that sounds very spiritual, but it is not really biblical: the issue of a quiet time in the morning. I am not against a morning quiet time. I am only against those who say every believer must have a morning quiet time. Those who teach this often

refer to Scriptures that speak about praying in the morning. But as we have just seen, the Bible teaches us that there are various times of prayer. It also speaks about praying in the afternoon and praying in the evening. If we are going to use the morning passages to teach a morning quiet time, then passages can also be used to teach an afternoon quiet time and an evening quiet time.

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I think the truth of the matter is that God expects us to devote a part of a day to Him, but what part of the day is up to the individual. There is no biblical hard and fast rule in this area. We should be open to praying to the Lord throughout the day; but, as far as a special time of day, I think that is up to every individual. The Bible does not specify a quiet time to begin with, let alone what time of day to have the quiet time. The Bible speaks of a variety of times of prayer just as it did with places of prayer.

B. Morning Prayer

Secondly, there are passages that speak of a morning prayer time. Psalm 5:3: *In the morning will I order my prayer unto you*. Psalm 88:13: *In the morning shall my prayer come before you*. Mark 1:35 shows that Yeshua prayed in the morning.

C. Evening Prayer

Third, the Bible also speaks about praying in the evening. Psalm 141:2, 5: *as the evening sacrifice*. There were examples of evening prayers in Matthew 14:23 and 26:36-44. Luke 6:12 records praying all night. So there are verses that teach praying in the morning; but, also verses that teach praying in the evening and praying throughout the night.

D. Throughout the Day

Fourth, while we are free to pray throughout the day, the Bible also points out that there were set times that believers set aside for prayer (Acts 3:1; 10:9, 30). So while there was the freedom to pray at a moment's notice, there are also set times of prayer. There is nothing wrong with scheduling a specific period of prayer.

E. In Times of Emergency and Crisis

The fifth thing about times of prayer concerns praying in times of emergency and crisis. When these things happen, the Bible encourages us to pray. In I Chronicles 5:20, they prayed in the midst of battle. The same thing is true in II Chronicles 13:13-16 and 20:1-19. Psalm 50:15 states: *call upon me in the day of trouble*. Psalm 77:1- 2 and 86:7 point out that: in the day of my trouble a person should reach out to God. Psalm 130:1: *Out of the depths have I cried*. Jonah 2:1-9 prayed while he was in the sea. In Luke 22:35-46, Jesus prayed as He underwent the agony of Gethsemane.

F. Before Meals

The sixth thing is to pray before meals a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord. Matthew 14:19 and Acts 27:35 speak of praying before meals.

In I Timothy 4:4-5, Paul points out that all food is to *be received with thanksgiving* and anything we eat is *sanctified through ... prayer.*

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G. During Busy Times

A seventh thing concerning the time of prayer is being able to pray in the midst of busyness (Lk. 5:15-16). It is really easy to set aside our prayers when we are not busy, but when we are most busy, we should take a few seconds out here and there and just thank the Lord, pray to Him, seek encouragement, and seek enablement. We should never become so busy that we set aside the issue of prayer.

H. Continuous Prayer

The eighth thing concerning the times of prayer is that prayer should be continuous at all times. We should always have this constant readiness for praying. Luke 18:1 states: [men] *ought always to pray*. Ephesians 6:18 says: *praying at all seasons*. I Thessalonians 5:17 says *pray without ceasing.* Again, we should always be ready and willing and feel like praying at all times.

So, as in the area of places of prayers, there is a variety in times of prayers but we should be careful not to become legalistic in either of these two areas.

IX. THE POSTURE OF PRAYER

Just as in places of prayer and times of prayer, the posture of prayer is various; there is no fixed rule whatsoever. Concerning the posture of prayer, there are nine specific things the Bible speaks about.

A. Standing

First, the Bible mentions standing while praying. So, standing straight up while praying is a valid posture in prayer (Mk. 11:25; Lk. 18:13; Jn. 17:1).

B. Kneeling

A second posture is that of kneeling. We do not practice this too much in corporate prayer anymore. I think we should consider doing so more often but not get legalistic about it. It should definitely be balanced out with some of the other postures (I Kg. 8:54; Lk. 22:41; Acts 20:36; Eph. 3:14). Kneeling, too, is a valid option in praying.

C. Prostrate

The third posture is being prostrate (Mat. 26:39). When we stand we are standing on our feet straight up. When we kneel we put our knees down to the floor but the rest of the body is still in an upright position. When we prostrate ourselves, we actually bring our heads down to the ground and our forehead is touching the ground. The body may be totally flat, so it is like standing up in a horizontal position; or our feet may still be in a kneeling position with our heads prostrate to the

ground. This, too, is seldom used except in extreme circumstances; yet, this is a valid option concerning the proper postures of prayer.

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D. Lying Down

A fourth posture is lying in bed. Sometimes people are too sick to be moved and lying in bed is a proper posture for prayer (II Kg. 20:2; Ps. 63:6).

E. Sitting

A fifth posture is sitting down (I Kg. 18:42). I suspect that is the position most of us are using today whether we are in our private prayer life or in corporate prayer. While this posture has become overbalanced today, it is a valid option.

F. Hanging on a Cross

The sixth posture we find in Scripture is not one to practice: *hanging on the cross*. In Luke 23:42, there was a prayer while hanging on a cross. However, we are able to derive an application from this because hanging on a cross was in the midst of execution. If we are in an extreme situation, we should be praying regardless of what the situation is. Sometimes we may be in a forced posture. Enforced persecution may require us to be in a specific posture and we can pray even in that posture.

G. Walking on Water

A seventh posture we see in Scripture is that Peter prayed while he was walking on the water (Mat. 14:30). Most of us will never walk on water. But here again, in a situation where we are in a unique posture position, such as on the side of a mountain, we should be able to issue a word of prayer. We should be able to communicate with God under any and all circumstances.

H. Head Bowed

An eighth posture is the head bowed (Gen. 24:26; Ex. 4:31; 12:27).

I. Eyes Closed or Opened

The ninth thing on the posture of prayer concerns the eyes. Although we have become accustomed to praying with our eyes closed, there is no example anywhere in Scripture of people praying with their eyes closed. In fact, we read of people praying with their eyes open and lifted up (Jn. 11:41; 17:1). It is not a sin to close your eyes in prayer. There is nothing wrong with keeping your eyes open in prayer so long as your opened eyes do not allow for distraction. But some people, even with their eyes closed, still allow their mind to wander. So, many can concentrate better in their prayer life by keeping their eyes open. But, here again, there is freedom in the Lord.

X. THE POWER AND RESULTS OF PRAYER

Prayer does result in things being accomplished. And let me bring out six things from the Bible that show both the power and the results of

prayer.

First, in Exodus 32, God was threatening to destroy Israel because of their sin with the golden calf; but, the prayer of Moses in Exodus 32:11-14 saved Israel.

A second example of the power and results of prayer concerns Samuel. Samuel was able to subdue the Philistines by virtue of his prayer life (I Sam. 7:5-14).

Third, is Elijah. Elijah was able to break a drought by bringing rain through his prayer (I Kg. 18:41-45). James falls back on this (Jas. 5:17-18) in order to encourage people to pray because the prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much.

Fourth, prayer accomplishes the divine purpose (I Jn. 5:14-15). God has a purpose but prayer is one of the means of accomplishing that purpose. Remember, the purpose of God does not only have an end but also has a means. The means by which God will sometimes accomplish His purposes is by means of prayer.

Fifth, it results in some definite answers (Mk. 11:24; Jn. 14:13-14).

Sixth, prayer results in the glorification of God; God is glorified by means of our prayer life (Jn. 14:13).✡

NOTES

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS BIBLE STUDY, DR. FRUCHTENBAUM RECOMMENDS:
MBS145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, and 151.