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## Prayer

In ancient times long before the days of Christ people began to realize that there was something missing and not quite right, both in the world in general and in themselves personally. They wanted more in their life and yet they could not quite put their finger on what was lacking. The missing part was separation from God and His Presence. Genesis 4:26 says, *'then men began to call on the name of the Lord'*...this is the heart of prayer. It comes from deep within man and is a primitive gut level cry for reconciliation and intimacy with His creator.

Unfortunately we have made it very sanitized and religious, a bit like saying grace around a table with hands clasped together or kneeling next to a bed five minutes before sleeping. However, God's heart cry is that we would reach out to Him in order to know Him.



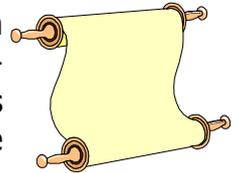
Outside of fellowship with God people will always be craving to satisfy a void that only God can fill whether it be materialism, hedonism (living for pleasure i.e. sex, drugs, partying etc), personal achievement or recreation and leisure. Our prayer life will be the major vehicle in our lives in which we enjoy God, see His purposes fulfilled in our lives and to impact our world. I believe if we don't overcome in our prayer life we will not overcome in any other part of our Christian experience; it is foundational.

### How often should we pray?

Paul said, *'pray without ceasing'* (1 Thessalonians 5:17) with all different types of prayer, (Ephesians 6:18). Prayer can range from intense, high energy spiritual warfare to quiet, still contemplation, and from exuberant praise to quietly talking to God when you go about your daily tasks. We will discuss several types of prayer as well as

an overview which will give you a good place to start.

In the time of Jesus, rabbi's (Jewish teachers) taught by topical outline and this is the way that Jesus taught the disciples how to pray in what we know as 'the Lord's Prayer'. This is a template on how we are to approach God and how we should prioritize our prayer lives, it is not to be a mantra that we repetitively chant.



Before we look at the Lord's Prayer it is vital to establish that when we pray, we are praying to God the Father in the *name of Jesus*. When we approach the ruler of the universe we are to do it on the basis of Jesus' provision on the cross (His shed blood for our sins) and not according to our own goodness.

*'Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full.'*

*John 16:23-24*

When you are approaching God the Father you are approaching an awesome throne room (read Daniel 7:9,10,13,14, Ezekiel 1:26-28 and Revelation 4) and He invites us to approach Him anytime and under any circumstance.

*'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need'.*

*Hebrews 4:16*

# The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is not to be merely to be recited verbatim but used as an outline in heartfelt prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).



**Our Father who art in heaven:** the paternal part of the prayer. He is not a force, He is our Heavenly Father who loves us (John 3:16), has provided provision for our salvation and invites us to come and have fellowship with Him.

**Hallowed be Your name:** the praise part of the prayer. There is a divine protocol in approaching Him. Thanking Him and worshipping Him creates a spiritual pathway and opens up the heavens.

Thank Him for what He has already given you (i.e. health, family etc). And research the Psalms so that You can praise Him for who He is (these will give you a good start: Psalm 23, 34, 139).

**Let Your kingdom come let Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven:** the priority part of the prayer. In the present season that we are living, the world is under a curse and is oppressed by an invisible kingdom of darkness (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:19, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:3,4). This is temporary as Jesus is coming back to rule and reign (Revelation 19:11-16). We are His ambassadors (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:20) and are to be instrumental in seeing Heaven invade earth with His Presence, provision and power. His kingdom is our highest priority.

**Give us this day our daily bread:** the provision part of the prayer. God is our provider and we need provision in our daily lives (jobs, opportunities, food etc) as well as special needs such as deliverance or healing. We need to ask Him for our provisions (Matthew 7:7-11) and then believe (Mark 11:23, 24) that we have those things we ask.

**And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us** - the pardon part of the prayer. Provision for forgiveness was made at the cross and we need to be mindful that we walk under the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:7-9).

There are many things that people may have done to us such as manipulate, betray and misrepresent however we must release any bitterness and forgive them or else God cannot forgive us.

Unforgiveness might not seem like a big deal but it can bring us under a curse (Hebrews 12:15) and ultimately keep us out of heaven (Matthew 18:21-35 & 6:14,15).



**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one:** the protection part

of the prayer. Satan and His fallen angels were comprehensively defeated at the cross (Colossians 2:14,15) but he seeks to resist the church and ultimately deceive followers

of Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8). The genuine follower of Christ has authority over demons (Luke 10:19,20) however we don't want to get into unauthorised skirmishes with the enemy but be led by the Spirit into our destiny. Every day we are to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us (Psalm 23 & Romans 8:14). We will touch on spiritual warfare and the armour of God in our second series of Life in the Spirit.

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

The power part of the prayer. At the end of the prayer we start to thank God that He has done all those things that we have asked for. When we live in praise we live in His power and Presence and experience His provision (Psalm 150).

# The Holy Spirit



The next type of prayer we will discuss is communion with the Holy Spirit. Do you want to hear God speak to you? He is speaking but are we listening? He often speaks in a still, small voice within our hearts however we need to slow ourselves down so we become still before Him. It is very easy to look for the spectacular but miss the supernatural.

Jesus said to His disciples that he was returning to heaven but was sending 'Another' (Greek word is 'Allos' meaning another of the same kind) who will help, comfort, reveal Jesus and lead us into all truth (John 14:16,26, 15:26, 16:7-14). This 'Another' is the Holy Spirit. Jesus and the Father are in heaven but the Holy Spirit is here with us now and we are called to commune and wait on Him so He can empower and direct us.

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."*

*2 Corinthians 13:14*

When waiting on God it is good to start by finding a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Then maybe read a hand full of Scriptures to get yourself going (a good place to start are Scriptures on the manifestation on God's supernatural Presence such as Revelation 1:4-20, Matthew 17:1-7 & Acts 2:1-21). Then begin to worship the Lord and thank Him for who He is and what He was done in your life.



Once you begin to be aware of His Presence, stop and just be still before Him, Psalm 46:10 *'Be still and know that I am God.'* Start by spending five to ten minutes doing this and over time increase it; it is a little like building up a muscle. Over several weeks you will find yourself much more at rest as well as being aware of getting slight spiritual impressions (downloads). This is God speaking to you...it is very exciting.

In everyday life, the less you eat the hungrier you get whereas in your spiritual life, the more you eat (spiritually feed on His word and Presence) the hungrier you get.

## Tongues

The last type of prayer I want to address is the supernatural gift of speaking in tongues. Once we receive Jesus into our lives He takes residence on the inside of us however He knew that we would need power to serve Him effectively (Acts 1:8).



Just as we get baptised in water (full immersion and totally saturated) we can be baptised in the Holy Spirit; it is for all Christians who desire it and is experienced by hundreds of millions around the world today. It is a baptism of power with the Biblical evidence of speaking in unknown tongues. Read the account of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and begin to meditate on it in Acts chapter two.

***The goal is the full immersion in His Presence and power, the evidence is a changed life of power and speaking in unknown tongues.***

# Receiving The Baptism of The Holy Spirit

How do I receive it?

1 **Desire it** - We must be hungry for more of God as He is hungry for more of us.

*'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they will be filled.'*

Matthew 5:6

2 **Ask Him for it** - Jesus is the One Who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist said of Jesus *'He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'*

3 **Receive it by faith** - We receive everything by faith including our salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Everyone's experience is unique as some people are overwhelmed with God's presence as unknown tongues gush out of their mouth and some just feel butterflies in their stomach. If you feel something building up on the inside of you release it out of your mouth as the Holy Spirit gives you utterance. It is not in your known language but in unknown, one-syllable sounds as the Holy Spirit takes your words and gives them power.

*'Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find and knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and you him who knocks it will be opened.'*

Matthew 7:7,8

4 **Practice it** - Once you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, pray in tongues everyday for it is the Holy Spirit praying through you the perfect will of God in your life. Praying in the Holy Ghost should be done often as it builds up our faith and leads us into His purposes for our lives.

**Go for it!**

*'But you beloved, building yourself up on your holy faith praying in the Holy Spirit.'*

Jude 20

*'I thank My God I speak with tongues more than you all.'*

2 Cor. 14:18

## Questions

1. In what foundational area do we need to learn to overcome?

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2. Can you name the 7 'P's of the Lord's Prayer?

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3. Who is the 'Another' Jesus promised would come?

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4. Why has the Holy Spirit come (Acts 1:8)?

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5. Who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit?

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6. How do we receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

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