

## Prayer

- I. What is prayer?
  - A. Prayer is talking to God.
  - B. It is our hearts desire expressed to God (Rom 10:1)
  - C. Prayers and deeds of charity ascend as a memorial before God (Acts 10:4)
  
- II. What are examples of appropriate settings for offering prayers to God?
  - A. We may pray in secret (Matt 6:6) - private prayers between us and God
  - B. We may offer family prayers (Acts 10:2, 30) - prayers in the home with family
  - C. We may offer special group prayers (Acts 20:36) - special purpose, common need prayers
  - D. We may offer public prayers (I Cor 14:12-19) - Prayers in behalf of all
  - E. As children of God, our access to the Father is not limited by the setting
  
- III. Is there a preferred posture for praying to God?
  - A. The Old Testament contains many examples of God's people praying in different physical postures:
    1. Prayers have been offered by those standing (Neh 9:1-5)
    2. Prayers have been offered while kneeling (Ezra 9:5)
    3. David prayed while sitting (I Chron 17:16-17)
    4. Moses bowed before the Lord in prayer (Ex 34:8-9)
  - B. Before His crucifixion, Jesus fell flat on His face and prayed (Matt 26:39)
  - C. New Testament Christians prayed likewise under diverse physical postures:
    1. Christians knelt in prayer on the beach (Acts 21:5)
    2. Paul and Silas prayed while fastened in stocks in prison (Acts 16:23-25)
    3. Paul taught that men should pray "lifting up Holy hands" (I Tim 2:8)
  - D. Faithful people have offered acceptable prayers under many different settings And postures.
  
- IV. To whom do we pray?
  - A. The early Christians prayed to God (Acts 12:5)
  - B. Jesus taught His disciples to pray to the Father (Matt 6:9)
  - C. Only deity is worthy of prayer - Scripture reveals examples of prayers offered to the Father and Son
    1. Notice that while being stoned, Stephen offered up a prayer to Jesus (Acts 7:59-60)
    2. Paul seems to have petitioned the Lord (Jesus) regarding His thorn in the Flesh (II Cor 12:7-8)
  - D. There is no command, example, or inference even remotely suggesting that prayer should ever be offered to men (e.g., saints: Rom 1:7; I Cor 1:2) living or dead
    1. In fact, this contradicts other teaching by usurping the role of God (Ex 34:14; 20:3)

2. Only God is worthy of worship (Acts 14:11-15)
  3. We are not to worship angels (Rev 22:7-9)
  4. We are not to worship men (Acts 14:11-15; 10:25-26)
  5. We are not even to bestow religious titles upon men (Matt 23:8-12)
- V. We are to pray to God in the name of Jesus - through Jesus (John 14:13-14)
- A. Our access to God has been enabled by Jesus.
    1. Recall that our sins create a barrier separating us from God (Isa 59:1-2)
      - a. God is Holy and sanctified (Lev 11:44; Rev 4:8) - set apart from sin
      - b. God cannot have fellowship with sinners for then He would not be Holy and sanctified.
      - c. As sinners, we are deserving of punishment and death (Rom 6:23)
    2. Being sinless and Holy ( I John 3:5; I Pet 2:21-22), Jesus could take our punishment and bear our sin (I Pet 2:24)
    3. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, God was able to redeem us (I Pet 1:18-19) and reconcile us to God (II Cor 5:18-21)
  - B. All authority in Heaven and on Earth resides with Jesus (Matt 28:18)
  - C. Jesus is reigning over His Kingdom now and will reign until He delivers the Kingdom to His Heavenly Father when He returns to this earth (I Cor 15:24-26)
  - D. We are a royal priesthood through Christ (I Pet 2:5-10) and as such, now have access to God the Father through Him.
- VI. What are the Scriptural elements (ingredients) of prayer?
- A. Adoration - Our prayers acknowledge God for whom He is - the eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God and creator of all things.
    1. Jesus expressed it this way, "Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name" (Matt 6:9)
    2. The mere fact that we would approach God in prayer is an act of submission to Him and an acknowledgement that He is in control
  - B. Thanksgiving (Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; Heb 13:15)
    1. Jesus offered thanks to the Father in prayer (John 11:41-42)
    2. Note that Paul repeated thanked God for fellow Christians (Rom 1:8; Col 1:3; I Thess 1:2)
  - C. Intercession - prayer in behalf of others
    1. Jesus prayed for His Apostles (John 17:9-19) and for us (John 17:20-21)
    2. Paul prayed for others (II Thess 1:11) and asked others to pray for him (I Thess 5:25)
  - D. Confession - acknowledge our sin (I John 1:9)
  - E. Supplication/Petition - to ask for or make requests (Matt 7:7-11; Luke 11:5-13)
    1. Jesus told His Apostles to "ask in my name" (John 14:13-14)
    2. Paul encouraged Timothy to make known requests on behalf of all men (I Tim 2:1-3)

- VII. What personal attributes are necessary to offer an acceptable prayer to God?
- A. We must have the right relationship with God (Isa 59:1-2)
    - 1. It is likened to a Father-child relationship in Matt 6:9
    - 2. Only children of God can address Him as Father
    - 3. The basis for this relationship is Jesus (John 14:6) who sanctified us making us family (Heb 2:9-11)
  - B. We must walk in the light to continue in fellowship with God (I John 1:5-10)
    - 1. We must abide in Christ and His words must dwell in us (John 15:7)
    - 2. We must be righteous (James 5:16)
  - C. We must approach the Father through the name of Jesus - (John 14:13)
    - 1. Because of our sin, we have no intrinsic right to fellowship with God
    - 2. In fact, until Christ's shed blood cleanses our iniquities we are separated from God (Isa 59:1-2)
    - 3. Christians have access to God through prayer and may approach Him to ask for forgiveness when we sin as a Christian following our baptism (I John 1:7-9)
    - 4. Those who seek God will find Him (Acts 17:27-28; Acts 10)
  - D. We must offer our prayers in Spirit (with the right heart) and in mind (I Cor 14:15)
  - E. We must pray according to the will (Word) of God (I John 5:14)
    - 1. We learn God's will through the His Spirit's revelation (1 Cor 2:10-13)
    - 2. God's will is that which is good, acceptable, perfect (Rom 12:2)
    - 3. Abide in Jesus - Word abides in you (John 15:1-7)
      - a. Ask and receive (John 15:7)
      - b. By this the Father is glorified (John 15:8) - bear fruit, prove to be disciples
      - c. That the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13)
    - 4. Abide in God - Abide in love (I John 4:13-16)
    - 5. Abide in Love - Keep commandments (John 15:9-10; 14:13-15)
  - F. We must keep His commandments and do things pleasing in His sight (I John 3:22) – be faithful
  - G. We must have the right motive (John 4:24, James 4:3)
  - H. We must not pray to be seen or noticed by others for personal honor or glory (Matt 6:5-6)
  - I. We must ask in Faith - Believing that God can deliver (Matt 21:22; James 1:5-7) - Prayers are answered to Glorify God (John 11:25-42, 14:13, 15:7-8)
  - J. We must ask with confident expectation (Mark 11:24; James 1:5-7)
  - K. We must have a forgiving heart (Mark 11:25-26; Matt 6:14)
  - L. We must offer prayers with a spirit of humility and repentance (Luke 18:10-14)
  - M. We must pray with conviction, perseverance and tenacity (Luke 11:5-8, 18:1-8) - this shows our faith
  - N. We are to pray without ceasing (I Thess 5:17)
  - O. We are to pray with few words avoiding meaningless repetition (Matt 6:7)

- VIII. Why does God sometimes not give us the things we request in prayer?
- A. We may have sin in our lives (Ps 66:18)
  - B. We are disobedient to His commands (Prov 28:9)
  - C. We are inhumane or not responsive to the needs of others (Prov 21:13)
  - D. We ask selfishly with improper motives (James 4:3)
  - E. We lack faith and ask in doubt (James 1:5-7)
  - F. We are unforgiving to others (Mark 11:25-26; Matt 6:14-15)
  - G. We are filled with pride (Luke 18:11-14)
  - H. Husbands must show understanding and honor to their wives (I Pet 3:7-8)
  - I. We ask for things that are not in accordance with God's will and purpose (Matt 6:10)
    - 1. God is omniscient (Isa 40:13-14; I John 3:20)
    - 2. We often don't know what is best for us (Prov 16:25; Jer 10:23; Isa 55:8-9)
    - 2. We must trust God and accept that He knows what is best for us
    - 3. God gives what is good to those who ask (Matt 7:11-12; John 15:7-8)
- IX. What sort of things are we to pray for?
- A. Pray for those who persecute or mistreat you (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:28)
  - B. Pray for Christians (Col 1:3)
  - C. Pray for evangelists that they may have opportunities to preach the Word (Col 4:3)
  - D. Pray for the sick and pray for sinners (James 5:15-16)
  - E. Pray that you may not enter into temptation (Matt 26:41; Luke 22:40)
  - F. Pray for strength (Luke 21:36)
  - G. Pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22)
  - H. Pray for others to do the right things (II Cor 13:7)
  - I. Pray for spiritual enlightenment (Eph 1:16-18), spiritual wisdom and understanding (Col 1:9-10)
  - J. Pray for goodness and works of faith (II Thess 1:10-11)
  - K. Pray that the Word of the Lord may spread (II Thess 3:1)
  - L. Pray for deliverance from evil and perverse men (II Thess 3:2)
  - M. Pray for prosperity and good health (III John 1:2)
  - N. Pray for all men and for leaders and those in authority that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (I Tim 2:1-2)
- X. What if we do not know how to pray as we should?
- A. The Holy Spirit intervenes for us (Rom 8:26-27)
  - B. The Spirit knows our heart and can cover our inadequacies according to the will of God