

**Date** : 25 August 2024  
**Theme** : Kingdom living from the Sermon on the mount  
**Topic** : Praying Effectively  
**Key Passage:** *Matthew 6:1 – 14, 7:7 – 12*  
**Key Verse** : *When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:6*

## Introduction

In the Sermon, Jesus taught His disciples about prayer.

- What to pray.  
In the Lord's Prayer, He intends that this order and content of prayer will serve as a guide to our communication with our heavenly Father.
- How not to pray
- How to pray effective prayers.

## Picture of persevering prayer (Peniel).

There is in the Old Testament, an incident involving Jacob's encounter with a Person with whom he wrestled all night until the break of day. When the Person did not let go, Jacob enquired of His Name. The Person did not disclose His Name but Jacob was certain he had met with Deity. He named that place Peniel ...*For I have seen God face to face. Genesis 32:34.* The Prophet Hosea threw light on this holy encounter...*In his vigour he contented with a divine being; He contented with an angel and prevailed, he wept and entreated Him.... Hosea 12:4-5.*

Jacob wrestling with God all night and refusing to let go is a picture of persevering prayer. So the Lord teaches that we should keep on asking. Jesus also said you have not because you ask not. Prayer has power. Corporate prayer has more power *Matthew 18:20*. Prayer must be consistent, persevering, not giving up too soon.

Today we shall examine our Lord's teaching on what makes and breaks a prayer. We need His help to pray effectively.

## 1. How not to pray

Before Jesus gave His model on prayer, He told His disciples they should not follow how the pagans pray. Prayer is all about a relationship with our heavenly Father grounded in grace. When our prayers flow from a love relationship with our heavenly Father, we are not into manipulating outcomes.

- a) Do not pray in public to show off, like the hypocrites (pretentiously) *Matthew 6:5*.  
Jesus is not condemning public praying; rather, He is against self-promoting prayers that seek approval from people.
- b) Do not repeat words thoughtlessly. Jesus challenges the kind of prayer that tries to control God by lengthy prayers or repetition of words. That would mean it is all about me, not about a relationship with Him.
- c) Do not pray to inform God. He already knows our needs. When we speak to Him, He desires to meet our needs to get His Kingdom work done in relationship with us.

## 2. How to pray effectively

- a) Address the Father (rather than the Son or Holy Spirit) *Matthew 6:9*  
Prayer is based on a familial relationship...*our Father...* Connect with the Father.  
We get our magnifying glass off our fears and fightings, and on to our heavenly Father.

- b) Adoration – Hallow His Name *Matthew 6:9*
- Acknowledge His Lordship, honour (who He is).  
Declare allegiance to His Kingdom, power, glory.
  - Give thanks to His Name: Jesus as Lord, 300 names showing His worthiness.
    - Come with Praise and Worship *Psalms 8, 1 Chronicles 29:11 - 13*
    - Be Thankful: In everything give thanks (not, for everything) *1 Thessalonians 5:18*
- c) Confess any known sin *Matthew 5:12*  
*...forgive me for...(be specific) as I forgive others...* Appeal to the atoning sacrifice of Christ.
- d) Ask according to His will. *...give us this day... Matthew 5:11*  
 What's His will? *...Your Kingdom come... Matthew 6:10* (His will for all to come to repentance).
- e) Ask for (needs) *Matthew 5:13*
- Strength to overcome temptations that lead to sin
  - Deliverance from traps of the evil one
  - Pray with Supplication
- i) Intercession (praying on behalf of others)
- Salvation of the lost
  - Equipping of the saints
- ii) Systematically (daily prayer focus. **Prayer list** = who to pray for)  
 For each day of the week, include the following:
- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Monday    | - Children / grandchildren  |
| Tuesday   | - Making disciples of nations   |
| Wednesday | - Leaders, Church   |
| Thursday  | - Salvation of neighbours, loved ones<br>Cell members<br>Mission and outreach (Alpha, xfxz) |
| Friday    | - Extended family   |
| Saturday  | - Myself (vision casting, needs)  |
| Sunday    | - Worship   |
- iii) Petition (pray for yourself) *John 16:24*  
 Personal growth (beatitudes, holiness, godliness)  
 Problems (cast upon the Lord)  
 Needs (financial, relationship harmony)  
 Work (productivity, wisdom, ministry skills)  
 Goal (vision casting)

## Practicalities

- i) Prioritise Listening Time *Deuteronomy 28:1*
- Seek God first  
 example, Saul did not inquire of God (resulted in his premature death) *1 Chronicles 10:13,14*  
 David always inquired of the Lord and prospered in his way *1 Chronicles 14:10*
    - Be faithful (to obey His commandments)
      - Great Commandment
      - Great Commission
    - Pray with faith (Take hold of His promises)
- ii) Plan Listening Time
- Fix time and place
  - Hallowed hour with the Lord to be honoured
  - Surrender every department of your life (Read *My heart Christ's home* by Robert Munger)
- iii) Persevere in prayer. *Matthew 7:7 - 12*  
 - keep on praying *1 Thessalonians 5:17*. Pray without ceasing.

### 3. Jesus' acid tests of our relationship with God

#### a) Doing all to glorify the Father

*...let your light shine...men will see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven...  
Matthew 5:16*

#### b) Practising and teaching His commandments

*...will be called great in the Kingdom of heaven... Matthew 5:19*

- Who will be called least?
- What righteousness cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven? *Matthew 5:20*

#### c) Loving and praying for enemies

*...you may be sons of your Father in heaven...Be perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect...  
Matthew 5:45, 48*

#### d) Warning disciples of hell fire

- Anger with a brother  
Do not allow anger to control your lips, calling a brother "a fool" out of anger  
*...will be danger of fire of hell... Matthew 5:22*
- Adultery in your heart  
If committing adultery with your eye (or any part of your body causes you to sin), pluck out the offending part *...than for your whole body to go to hell... Matthew 5:29, 30*

#### e) Where's your treasure stored? *Matthew 6:19*

Laying up treasures on earth (temporal)

Laying up treasures in heaven (eternal)

### Application: What is hindering your prayer time?

### Application

#### ● Failure to hallow the hour with the Lord

- Too busy? Idolatry (work / leisure) more important than time with the Lord?

Solution:

- Identify the urgent from the important
- Self-examination – Don't value God? Giving the Lord leftover time or none?

Solution:

- Schedule best time of the day for time with God.

(Warning: No time for God = God will have no time for you)

#### ● Don't know what to do? How do I start?

- Approach your cell leader to do Listening Time with you.
- Start Worship (Read a Psalm)

#### ● Prayer not effective? ● Fulfil God's conditions

- Any unconfessed sin
- Prayer of faith *Hebrews 11:6, James 5:16*

#### ● Too self-centred ● Solution – Intercede for others (use **Prayer List**)

(Praying only for yourself is not considered "Kingdom first")