

The Privilege & Priority Of Prayer: Prayer Is More Than A Routine, It's A Lifestyle

Colossians 4; Matthew 28; John 14;
Matthew 6; Luke 11; Philippians 4; Hebrews 10

Some Relevant Statements About The Priority of Prayer

“You can use the last days’ events as a catalyst to introduce yourself to neighbors you haven’t met yet. Knock on their door and say, “Listen, you may think I’m a lunatic, but I want you to know that I’m a Christ-follower. And with all that is going on right now, I am praying for the neighbors on our street. Do you have any prayer requests?” —**Jack Hibbs**

“Prayer is one of the most precious privileges God has provided for those of us who have trusted in Christ as our Lord & Savior! The very reality that the Sovereign, All-powerful God, Who created & controls this world, allows us to address Him at any time is absolutely amazing. Because it’s such a marvelous privilege, it should always be one of our highest priorities! Beyond that, it’s intended to provide us with an authentic sense of peace, emotional well-being, & security in the midst of a world that’s been tainted & traumatized by sin.” —**GAD**

“Prayer is an investment of time that yields significant dividends, and it should be our first response, never a last resort.”

—**Chuck Swindoll**

“Prayer, desperate prayer, seems so simple, but it’s a step rarely taken by those facing conflict.” —**Erwin Lutzer**

“Prayer is the key to unlocking God’s prevailing power in your life.”

—**David Jeremiah**

“Prayer is the secret weapon of having an effective ministry. Prayer is so important that Satan would rather prevent Christians from praying than doing almost anything else.” —**Howard Hendricks**

“Prayer is not merely an option but a privilege and an obligation, a means to glorify God and experience His blessings!” —**Warren W. Wiersbe**

“Goals not bathed in prayer or brought in humility before the Lord turn out to be downright useless.” —**Chuck Swindoll**

“Prayer is about real-world concerns, spoken in real-world language. God does not want us to shift into a stained-glass prayer voice to address Him.” —**David Jeremiah**

“ACTION STEP: Present yourself to God and prayerfully ask Him to give you the faith to believe that you can experience genuine change in your attitude and behavior.” —**Erwin Lutzer**

“For those who have a deepening relationship with our Heavenly Father, prayer is an opportunity to share in God’s authority and accomplish His purposes on earth.” —**Warren W. Wiersbe**

—Some Personal Thoughts to Introduce This Week’s Devotional Study:

—Over the last two weeks, we’ve placed an emphasis on two of the most important truths related to our spiritual lives:

- 1) Trusting the Lord with all your heart & don’t lean on your own attempts to please God! &
- 2) We’ve been saved by grace by exclusively trusting in Christ; it’s never a result of our actions or accomplishments because God is opposed to pride & gives grace to the humble!

This week we’re setting our sights on the privilege & priority of prayer! Even though I strongly believe that the most effective way to approach Bible study/teaching/preaching is with an expository emphasis, this study will appear to be more topical in nature. Even though prayer is a very important topic that needs to be studied & addressed for the sake of our clear understanding, we’re approaching prayer from a perspective that asks what does God want us to know about prayer? Therefore, the first portion of the study/sermon presentation is using several specific texts that provide us with biblical principles about prayer. The second section of the presentation spells out **P-R-A-Y-E-R** in a way that describes & defines what’s involved in the practice of praying based on the principles presented in the first section.

—1— Thru-out both biblical & church history, there are many excellent examples of people we could call prayer warriors. In the Old Testament, Daniel was so well-known for his faithfulness in prayer that his prayer life was used against him in a plot to have him executed by being placed in a lions’ den. Prayer was made illegal, but Daniel refused to stop praying! The early Christians in Acts 12 prayed for Peter who was arrested by King Herod during the Passover. James, John’s brother had already been

executed by Herod & that was the plan for Peter as well. However, the Church prayed for Peter's release & in the middle of the night when Peter was asleep & chained to 2 other prisoners, an angel came, awakened him & his chains fell off. The angel escorted him out of the prison in spite of the guards, walked him out of the prison, & Peter went to Mary's house. Please read this for yourself in Acts 12:1–19.

—**What does this miraculous event teach us about the power of prayer?**

The Early Church had a contagious enthusiasm & excitement that also led to persecution from the Jewish leaders. Sometimes people are more driven to pray during a crisis, but when the crisis is over, prayer often becomes less important. —Why does this happen? Personal thoughts?

—**How can we avoid losing sight of the need for consistent prayer & maintain a faithful prayer life? (What would you recommend to others about what should be involved in praying without ceasing?)**

—2— *The first biblical principle presented in the sermon was as faithful followers of the Lord, “we’re exhorted & encouraged to be **DEVOTED** to prayer.” {Colossians 4:2 = Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.} The phrase *devote yourselves to prayer* emphasizes the necessity to remain alert. Often Paul urged his readers to give prayer a sense of constant attention and priority. In our culture, it seems that the challenge we face when we do pray is being able to concentrate. In this passage, Paul reminded his readers to remain alert in prayer and to express gratitude in view of God's goodness and grace.*

Being alert in prayer seems to have several practical applications for us to consider. We should be observant in watching or listening for prayer requests; we should avoid being repetitious, praying without actually thinking about what we're saying; also we should pray with a sense of anticipation that God is at work in our lives.

—**How can we be more alert in seeing opportunities for prayer?**

—**What steps could we take to make prayer a higher priority?**

—**What's involved in having an energetic & faithful prayer routine?**

—3— *The 2nd & 3rd biblical principles that instruct us to pray are related to why we pray in the name of Jesus & to Whom do we direct our prayers? If we want to be serious in our desire to follow Jesus' teaching about prayer, we should note that He seemed to place an emphasis on addressing our prayer to our **Father in Heaven!** He also explained that **He was giving us His name to provide us with the authority to pray.** Please carefully read Matthew 6:5–15; Luke 11:1–4; John 14:6; & Matthew 28:18. (You might*

also observe how the Apostle Paul typically mentioned that his prayers were addressed to the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!) {Examples = Ephesians 1:17; 3:14, 20–21; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 1:3; 4:3; Romans 15:13, 30 among several others} Whenever we pray, we're addressing our Father in Heaven & we have access to Him because Jesus has given us this special privilege. When He died on the Cross at Calvary, the veil in the Temple was split from top to bottom & the Holy of Holies was opened for anyone who trusts in what Jesus accomplished in His death, burial, & resurrection. Please read Hebrews 10:1–25, especially verses 19–25. This helps us understand that the privilege of having access to God comes from Jesus' sacrifice.

—**If someone would say to you “I feel so unworthy to pray & draw near to the holy God.” How would you counsel him [her]?**

—**Sometimes theological study can seem deep & hard to understand. However, there are benefits to digging deeper & seeing the truths God has revealed to us in His Word. Why is it valuable to recognize that prayer is a privilege for authentic followers of Christ?**

—**When His disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, Jesus gave some very specific instructions. Among them is the value of showing reverence & respect to God. Why is it helpful for us to know this?**

—4— *This study could be much longer, but at this point, let's take a closer look at the **P-R-A-Y-E-R** section of the sermon notes.*

Prayer involves:

Praising God with an authentic sense of gratitude!

Recognizing God's sovereign authority!

Acknowledging our absolute & utter dependence on God!

Yielding to God's will!

Entering into God's throne of grace!

Re-directing our attention toward God!

—**How would implementing this pattern of prayer impact or influence your prayer life?**

—**Why are we more willing or driven to pray when there's a crisis or challenge we are facing? How can we become more motivated to pray?**