



## **A Biblical Basis for Praying**

**Mary Laughman, Georgia WMU President**

How often have we asked ourselves these questions? ... When should I pray? ... What should I say? ... Where should I pray? ... Why should I pray? ... Will my praying really make a difference? ... and the question for this month is ... What is prayer? By examining God's Word, we can discover 'what prayer is' and 'what prayer is not'. We read many prayers of faithful saints throughout the Bible and Jesus gave us clear instructions as He modeled prayer and taught His disciples how to pray.

### **'Lord, teach us to pray as you prayed'**

Jesus is our perfect example for prayer as He modeled a love relationship between Him and His Father during His time here on earth. Jesus lived a lifestyle of praying before His disciples – they even asked Him to teach them to pray as we read in Luke 11:1 – 'And it came to pass that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray...' The disciples had witnessed Jesus spending many hours praying with His Father. Jesus stepped away often from the busyness and the crowds to spend time with His Father praying before decisions, praying for strength when tempted, praying for direction, praying the Father's will, praying in the garden before He paid the sacrifice for our sins at Calvary. Prayer does not come naturally to most believers – it is learned as it is modeled by others, taught, and put into practice. Our prayer is that all of us will develop such a love relationship with our Heavenly Father that we will pray without ceasing as we bring glory to God and see Christ's Kingdom work accomplished here on earth.

- **Prayer is not to be feared**

**Prayer is** living in the presence of God as we engage in intimate conversation with a Heavenly Father Who is always pursuing a love relationship with His child. We were created for His pleasure and fellowship as we read in Revelation 4:11b- 'You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created'. God loves us so much that He provided a way for our salvation so that He could fellowship with us. Jeremiah 33:3 tells us that God promises to answer us if we call on Him and He will show us mighty things that we could never know. Our loving response back to God should be the same as the psalmist David in Psalms 42:1 'Father, as the deer pants for water, so my heart pants for You'.

- **Prayer is not primarily about you**

**Prayer is** focused on God, Who He is and His desires. The model prayer that Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13 begins and ends with praise and adoration for God – 'Our Father, Who are in Heaven, hallowed by Thy name . . . for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.' As Elaine Helms shares in her book, Prayer101, 'We become like who we worship, so keeping our eyes on Jesus as we pray will draw us closer to Him. Getting to know the names and attributes of God will help us know what our objective is in becoming more Christlike.' (for further study, names and attributes of God related to the monthly focus will be found under the tab 'Listening and Responding to God')



- **Prayer is not having to wonder what to pray**

**Prayer is** listening to God speak through His Word and the Holy Spirit directing us to pray back to God His Words so His will is accomplished on earth as it has already been in Heaven (Matthew 6:10). The priority of prayer is the will of God. As we 'delight ourselves in the Lord' (Psalms 37:4), our heart will line up with His and we'll know what to pray. The more we read His Word, the more we will begin to see our world from His perspective. He will direct our prayers and as Elaine Helms shares in her book, Prayer101, 'God will include us in His work here on earth as He invites us into partnership with Him to implement His own decisions in the affairs of mankind.' This is why we are prompted to intercede on behalf of the spiritually lost, our family, those in authority, our churches, other Christians, the work of missionaries around the world, etc. It is 'joy unspeakable and full of glory' as we work with our Heavenly Father by praying the prayers He wants prayed to accomplish His plans and to see the glory of God in our world today. A quote from Andrew Murray – 'My prayer life must be brought entirely under the control of Christ and His love. Then, for the first time, will prayer become what it really is, the natural and joyous breathing of the spiritual life, by which the heavenly atmosphere is inhaled and then exhaled in prayer'.

- **Prayer is not about giving God a wish list of wants**

**Prayer is** a moment by moment trusting and believing that God knows what is best for us in every situation. Jesus tells us in the model prayer that we are to ask for 'our daily bread'. God has promised to provide our daily needs and He will as Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:25-34. Our first and foremost desire should be as stated in Matthew 6:33 – 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.' He wants us to depend on Him daily for our needs just as the children of Israel were given manna for each day. The motive for all that we ask should not be our own selfish wants, but that God will be glorified in our relationships, careers, family, finances, ministry, etc.



- **Prayer is not passive**

**Prayer is** actively engaging in a battle against the Enemy for souls and Christ's Kingdom. Satan doesn't want us to have an intimate love relationship with our Father. When we become a child of God, we are identified with Christ and become an enemy of Satan as we read in Ephesians 6:12 – 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' As a soldier in God's army, He provides us with the uniform of His Spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:10-19), as we prepare for battle using the Word of God and prayer as our offensive weapons against the Enemy. Our charge as praying Christians is unity. To use a few of the words in the song 'Onward Christian Soldiers' – 'Like a mighty army moves the church of God; We are not divided, all one body we' emphasizes the strength of all of us actively engaging in prayer together. Jesus' prayer for His disciples and us in John 17:21 was and still is today - 'That they may all be one, even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me'. Elaine Helms shares in her book, Prayer 101 - 'We can link arms with intercessors around the world like highways on a map and bring the power of God to earth as it is in heaven'. Let's stay alert in the Spirit and persevere in prayer to set captives free from the enemy. We are blessed to be a soldier in God's army.

'The Holy Spirit has us by one hand as He indwells us and Jesus has us by the other hand as He is at the right hand of God – so we're in pretty good company when we are praying'. (T. W. Hunt)

Monthly focus for June: **Prayer: Confession and Repentance**

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## Resources for One in Prayer

### **Books:**

*Prayer101 – What Every Intercessor Needs to Know*

Elaine Helms

New Hope Publishers

*Live A Praying Life*

Jennifer Kennedy Dean

New Hope Publishers

*The Holy Spirit – Activating God's Power in Your Life*

Billy Graham

W. Publishing Group

### **Book Studies:**

*Live A Praying Life*

Jennifer Kennedy Dean

New Hope Publishers

*Disciple's Prayer Life: Walking in Fellowship with God*

T. W. Hunt & Catherine Allen

LifeWay

### **Websites:**

Jennifer Kennedy Dean

[www.prayinglife.org](http://www.prayinglife.org)

International Mission Board, SBC

[www.imb.org/pray](http://www.imb.org/pray)

### **Ideas for Prayer Groups:**

*Prayer Prompts for Prayer Groups*

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