

Prayer – Part I (*Spiritual Milk*)

How does one communicate to God? The instant answer is in prayer.

**Do you really know what prayer is?
Why do we need to pray?
Do you know how to pray?
Why are our prayers not answered?
What kind of prayer does God like?**

Let me try and answer all these and other questions with regards to prayer. All these are found in the Bible.

Now let's first find out what prayer is.

Prayer comes from the word 'Pray', which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "wish or hope strongly for something". This has to come from your heart. 'Prayer' is defined as "a request for help or expression of thanks made to God or a god."

Prayer is in short, a strong wish or hope or thanks that comes from your heart directed to God. It cannot be directed to anyone else other than God or a small god.

We believers of the true God can direct our prayers only to God. Praying to anyone else is a complete NO. We can ask others to intercede for us or help us lift our prayers to God.

Exodus 2

²³ During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Here in Exodus 2 we read that the 'long period' was 400yrs. For 400yrs God did not notice the Israelites. He only noticed them due to their cries, because of the pain they under went under slavery.

The reason was that the Israelites did not worship Yahweh (Lord) but were idol worshipers like their rulers, the Egyptians.

Exodus 32

⁷ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

When they thought they were lost they immediately returned to their pagan practices.

Leviticus 17

⁷ They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols [Or demons] to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.'

Acts 7

⁴³ You have lifted up the shrine of Molech
and the star of your god Rephan,
the idols you made to worship.
Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.

It took 400yrs for their cries of agony and pain to reach God. They could have easily sought God's help by just praying to Him.

The option was very simple. Either they could have easily prayed to God, seeking His help, or suffer like they did for 400yrs before God took notice of them.

This choice is also put before us today. Either we pray to God in our needs and problems, or suffer like the Israelites did for long years, for God to intervene and help us.

Why do we need to pray?

There is a common belief, that "since God knows everything and He loves me, He will take care of my needs and my problems. Why do I need to pray?"

When God created the whole world after He made man, He gave man dominion over all the earth.

Genesis 1

²⁶ *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

²⁷ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

²⁸ *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

Since God gave dominion to man over the earth He will not intervene or break His word. There for we need to ask God to intervene, so that He can help us.

We can prayer for ourselves or on behalf of other.

In a family, any member of the family can invite a guest / friend to the house, because we have the authority as a member of the family.

When we pray for others, as brothers and sisters, we ask God to intervene in their lives.

The Lord has said in His Word that if we need any thing it is for us to just ask and we will receive it from the Father. Even when we know how great a sinner we are our Father still loves us and will answer our prayer.

Matthew 7

⁷ *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.* ⁸ *For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

⁹ *"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"*

Let us now learn how to pray?

For this let's take some examples of prayers from the Bible.

Luke 18

¹⁰ *Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.*

¹¹ *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*

¹² *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

¹³ *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

¹⁴ *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other:*

Here we learn that there were two people who prayed, but only one person's prayer was answered.

The Pharisee: He stood right in front, prayed about himself, thanked God, told God that he was good, unlike the others, he fasted twice a week and he gave tithes.

What did he do? He thanked God, he kept himself well in the eyes of God, he fasted twice a week and he gave tithes.

He was doing well, unlike most of us. We do not fast nor give tithes. But yet, we learn that his prayer was not answered. What did he do wrong?

He stood right in front and told God how good he was, as if God did not know. He had pride in himself. He compared himself to others. He judged others, thereby bringing judgment on himself.

What did the publican do?

A publican / tax collector was the most hated person by the public. He was feeling bad about what he was doing. He humbled himself and was full of repentance.

He asked God for forgiveness and mercy.
His prayer was answered.

Matthew 6

⁵ *"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But 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.*

The Lord gave us a very simple and easy way to pray. He gave us a model prayer that we can say and use as a template to pray?

Matthew 6

⁹ *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

¹⁰ *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread.*

¹² *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

Here this model prayer if you analyze you will understand how to prayer.

Our Father which art in heaven, (acknowledging God and His power) Hallowed be thy name. (Praising and worshiping Him.)

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (acknowledging the authority of God and accepting it.)

Give us this day our daily bread. (asking God for our daily needs)

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (asking for forgiveness, at the same time forgiving others.)

And lead us not into temptation, (humbling ourselves before God and telling him we are weak so not to test us.) but deliver us from evil. (asking for us to be made righteous again). For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever (Glorifying and worshiping Him) Amen (Accepting and saying Yes in faith that our

prayer is already answered.)

So Our Father not only gives us a beautiful prayer to say, but this the Lord showed us how to prayer.

- 1) Acknowledge God as your Father.
- 2) Acknowledge His authority and His high place.
- 3) Glorify God and his Name.
- 4) Accept Him and His will in your life and on all the earth.
- 5) Acknowledge Him as the source of everything and ask for our daily needs.
- 6) Asking for forgiveness.
- 7) Obeying his commandment of forgiving other.
- 8) Be humble and meek before Him.
- 9) Ask for His protection.
- 10) Again glorify and praise Him.

This same mode can be used for our daily prayer also. In fact the same model was also given in the Old Testament and also the Our Father prayer was also given in the Palms. Our God is the same and will always be the same. So we do not have to change or be creative but be simple, meaningful and honest in our prayers.

Our God is Spirit and the best prayers are when your spirit prayers to the Lord. In the Old Testament God was not in man, except for a few chosen ones. After the sacrifice of Jesus, now that we have received the Helper, the Holy Spirit of God, God himself is in us and He operates in spirit not in the natural, but His power manifests in the natural.

John 4

²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks

One very important thing in our prayer when we ask for anything, we should do so in the name of Jesus. Jesus was the payment for our salvation. He died for us and made every thing available for us already.

When we prayer in the name of Jesus we are just cashing the receipt. It is assured to us again and again that any prayer in the name of Jesus shall be answered.

John 14

¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 15

¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

John 16

²³In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Why are our prayers not answered?

When we say prayers of hope and long prayers without any meaning God does not answer them.

James 5

¹⁵And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Our God only understand one language that is of faith. So when we pray our prayer should be a prayer of faith not of hope.

A prayer of hope is like a confused request. It's like me telling you to give me something, and then saying "If you do not give me it is okay. I do not want to disturb you, I wanted this thing but then I do not want to worry you etc..."

Then there is another kind of prayer that is only mouth exercise. I call then the chewing gum prayers. In the start they taste good; later they are only to pass your time. They do only two good things give you mouth exercise and keep you teeth clean. Every body sees them shine and think you are holy.

Chewing gum payers to God is like you talking Greek to me. God does not understand a word of what you are saying or doing. I too start with these chewing gum prayers till the Lord showed to me what they really are.

Matthew 6

⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Another thing is we might be making good prayers but we might be living a life of sin and do not want to come out of it. We are very comfortable in the ditch.

Isaiah 1

15And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Mark 12

⁴⁰They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Psalm 50

¹⁶But to the wicked, God says:

*"What right have you to recite my laws
or take my covenant on your lips?*

¹⁷You hate my instruction

and cast my words behind you.

*¹⁸When you see a thief, you join with him;
you throw in your lot with adulterers.*

*¹⁹You use your mouth for evil
and harness your tongue to deceit.*

*²⁰You speak continually against your brother
and slander your own mother's son.*

*²¹These things you have done and I kept silent;
you thought I was altogether like you.*

*But I will rebuke you
and accuse you to your face.*

*²²"Consider this, you who forget God,
or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue:*

*²³He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me,
and he prepares the way
so that I may show him the salvation of God."*

In reality we prayer to God only when we want something or are in trouble and do no see a way out or like the Pharisee in Luke 18:9 we do not say prayers to God from our hearts but to boost our pride, ego and to show the world how good we are. Do we really love God that we will give up all that we love, but which God hates?

What kind of prayer does God like?

When we pray, our prayer should be a prayer of faith not of hope. When we pray we should believe that our prayer is already answered and our answer is on its way. For all things come from the unseen world to the natural (visible) world.

Matthew 21

²¹Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

²²And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

In the scriptures before these when Jesus spoke to the fig tree and cursed it He did not doubt about the result. The same way He tells us we must pray without doubting about receiving, even the impossible will be made possible.

So when you pray even if you make short prayer make it sweet and let it be from your heart. Our God is our Father, so talk to Him like you talk to your Father. If a father tells his child, "When I come back from work I will give you a chocolate." But in the evening after the father comes back from office he does not give you the chocolate immediately, he waits to see if the child remembers his words.

So ask your Father, who is so True and Holy. He will surely hear your prayer, for he loves you and go to any extent for you.

God bless you.