

Principles of Effective Prayer

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Caveat

- **Assumption**
 - Scripture is the only standard for determining what is truth
 - Scripture is the only infallible guide to normative behavior for disciples
- **Content**
 - Perhaps knowledge you may have, 2 Pet 1:12
 - Paradigm of biblical prayer, not common notions about prayer
 - Not how to get more out of a reluctant God”
- **Character**
 - Dangerous subject matter
 - Convicting subject matter

Principles of Effective Prayer

Introduction

So, how's your prayer life?



**“we don't know how to pray the way we should,”
Rom 8:26 CJB**

“Lord, teach us praying,” Luke 11:1

Our Situation

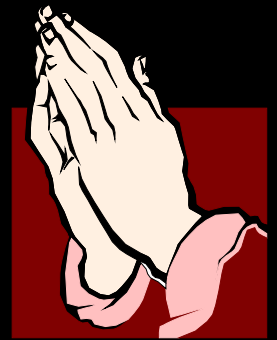
- **Our comparison**
 - Other people hear from God
 - Other people's prayers are answered
 - Other people have a consistent prayer life
- **Our dilemma**
 - Why doesn't God speak to me?
 - Why doesn't God answer my prayers?
 - Why doesn't God tell me what he wants?
 - Why doesn't God give me direction?
- **Our inadequacy**
 - We don't know what we really need
 - We don't know how to pray

Basic Questions

- Why is prayer so crucial?
- Whose prayers does God answer?
- Does God answer all prayers?
- Does God have a criteria for granting petitions?
- How should we pray?
- How can I develop a regular practice of prayer?
- What prevents effective prayer?

Principles of Effective Prayer

Part I: Conduct of Prayer



“When you pray...” Matt 6:5 CJB

“One day Yeshua was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Luke 11:1 CJB

Divine Response to Prayer

- **Whose prayer does God answer?**
 - Those who belong to God, Ex 32:29
 - The righteous, Prov 15:29; 1 John 3:22; Jam 5:16
 - All receive favor without asking, Matt 5:45; Jam 1:17
- **Responses in Scripture**
 - **YES**, Luke 1:13; Matt 8:3 (many others)
 - **NO**, Deut 3:25-26; Luke 12:13-14; 2 Cor 12:8
 - **SILENCE**, Job 13:24 (Silence not necessarily a “no.”)
 - When it seems like God is not working, He is still working, Mark 4:26-29
- **Timing**
 - We wait for his words, Ps 119:147
 - We wait for his action, Ps 40:1

Why Pray?

- **The Importance of Prayer**
 - To obey God, Matt 6:5
 - To bless the Name of God, Matt 6:9
 - To bless others, Luke 6:28; 2 Cor 1:11
- **The Promise of Prayer**
 - God will see (Matt 6:6)
 - God will hear, Ps 5:3; 2 Chron 7:14
 - God will answer (Isa 65:24; Jer 33:3; 1 John 5:15)
- **The Power of Prayer**, Eph 3:20; James 5:16
 - More than you ask
 - More than you can imagine
 - More than you're able to do

Biblical Word – Hebrew

- **Palal – Root verb**
 - To intervene or to interpose (judge)
 - Wide range of usage
 - Arbitrate, judge, intercede, pray
 - Derivative – Tephillah, “prayer,” 2 Sam 7:27
- **Context**
 - Pleading before a judge
- **Implications:**
 - What does it mean to approach the Holy God?
 - Requires self-judgment
 - Invokes God’s judgment

Biblical Words – Greek

“by prayer [proseuchê] and supplication [deêsis] with thanksgiving [eucharistia] let your requests [aitêma] be made known to God”
Phil 4:6

- **Proseuchomai (v.); Proseuchê**
 - LXX: renders Heb. *palal* (with its meaning)
 - NT: continues the Hebraic idea
 - Addressed to the God of Israel
 - Most frequent word for prayer (85 times)
 - Matt 5:44; 6:5-7; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6; 1 Tim 2:1
- **Deomai (v.); Deêsis (n.)**
 - To stand in need of, thus
 - To ask, pray, plead, petition, beg of God
 - Luke 1:13; Acts 4:31; Phil 4:6; 1 Tim 2:1

Biblical Words – Greek (cont.)

- **Eucharisteô (v.); Eucharistia (n.)**
 - To give thanks
 - Expression of thankfulness, 2 Cor 9:12; Phil 4:6; Col 2:7; 1 Tim 2:1
 - Corresponds to B'rakhot, Matt 15:36; Acts 27:35; Rom 14:6; 1 Cor 14:16; 1 Tim 4:4
- **Aiteô (v.); Aitêma (n.)**
 - to ask in expectation of a response
 - something urgently wanted
 - Matt 21:122; John 14:13-14; Phil 4:6; Col 1:9

Meaning of Prayer

- **Definition**
 - “Prayer” generally involves asking
 - Requests are specific
 - Requests based on real need
- **Elements**
 - Addressed to God of Israel
 - Sent to heaven, 2 Chron 30:27
 - Implies a relationship
 - Implies submission
 - Implies self-examination
 - Implies commitment

Categories of Prayer

- **Expressions**
 - Individual
 - Small group
 - Congregation
- **Types of Prayer**
 - B'rakhot (Blessings)
 - Lament
 - Petition
 - Supplication
 - Intercession

Leading Corporate Prayer

- **Types**
 - Worship service or small group?
 - Planned or Impromptu?
 - Written or extemporaneous?
 - Representational or participatory?
- **Pointers**
 - Pray with corporate pronouns, “us,” “our”
 - Don’t just pray; lead others in praying
- **Reality Check**
 - He: Enthroned in glory, surrounded by angels
 - We: Face-to-face with holy scrutiny
 - ∴ Recognize the weight of leading in public

1 Corinthians 11

- **Situation**
 - Culturally diverse and deeply conflicted
 - Paul quotes misbeliefs and then rebuts
 - Subject: prayer of Greek women in worship
 - Interpretive controversy: meaning of “head covered...uncovered”
- **Solution: Paul’s flow of argument**
 - Paul’s basic teaching, 11:3
 - Legalist application of Paul’s teaching, 11:4-7
 - Paul’s rebuttal, 11:8-9
 - Legalist counterpoint, 11:10
 - Paul’s rebuttal, 11:11-15
 - Paul’s final *halakhah*, 11:16 (freedom)

A Primer on Private Prayer

Matthew 6:6-7

- **Pray with a plan**
 - Follow a routine, Mark 1:35; Luke 2:37
 - Follow a schedule, Acts 3:1
- **Pray in a private place**
 - “room with door closed” – idiom of privacy
 - In the outdoors (Luke 5:16)
- **Pray with plainness**
 - Begin with B'rakhot
 - Economy of words
 - No manipulation or deals

B'rakhot

“Stand up, and bless ADONAI your God from everlasting to everlasting; let them say: "Blessed be your glorious name, exalted above all blessing and praise!" Neh 9:5 CJB

- **Classes of B'rakhot**
 - Blessings of enjoyment
 - Blessings over mitzvot (commandments)
 - Blessings of thanksgiving (cf. Phil 4:6)
- **Why the B'rakhot?**
 - To recognize the presence of God in life
 - To help us toward an active life in the service of God

B'rakhot in Practice

- **Sanctification – For Who He is**
 - Blessed Are You (*Barukh atah*)
 - O Lord our God (*Adonai Eloheinu*)
 - King of the Universe (*melekh ha olam*)
- **Proclamation – For What He has Done**
 - For sustenance
 - For Creation
 - For the days and seasons
 - For the covenant(s)
 - For the life everlasting
 - For forgiveness
 - For salvation
 - For restoration of Zion

Personal Need Prayers

- **For wisdom, Col 1:9; James 1:5**
 - Immediate decisions
 - Future planning
 - E.g., Gen 24:12 (Abraham's servant)
- **For provision, Matthew 6:25, 33**
 - Basic needs
 - Ministry needs
- **For safety**
 - Gen 32:11; Rom 15:30-31; Jam 4:13-15
- **For healing, James 5:14**
 - Physical restoration

The Model Prayer

- **Matthew 6:9-13**
 - Given in response to “teach us to pray”
- **Recipient, 6:9**
 - Our Father
 - In heaven
 - Prayers are not directed to Yeshua
- **Characteristics**
 - Priority is to magnify the Name
 - Absence of pressing for personal wants
 - Petitions are community oriented – “We”
 - Genuine spiritual concerns addressed

A Dangerous Prayer

- **Your kingdom come**
 - Will you surrender your rights?
- **Your will be done**
 - Is Torah really your standard?
- **Give us this day...manna**
 - Is your dependency really on Me?
- **Forgive us our debts as we forgive**
 - Ready for Me to treat you as you treat others?
(What is your forgiveness limit?)
- **Lead us not into temptation/testing**
 - How close to the edge do you want to live?

Aids to Prayer

- **B'rakhot**
 - Live in the awareness of God's constant provision
- **Bible reading, Psalm 119**
 - Turn Scripture into prayer
 - Accept the answers already given
- **Prayers in the Bible, Rom 15:4**
 - Learn from the heroes of the faith
- **Prayer songs, Eph 5:19-20**
 - Express your joy to the Lord
- **Inspirational books**

Hindrances to Effective Prayer

- **Weakness**
 - Fatigue, Matt 26:41
 - Failing to ask, James 4:2
 - Failing to trust (anxiety issues)
- **Sin**
 - Ignoring God, Jer 35:17
 - Injustice, Matt 23:14
 - Extravagance, James 4:3
 - Dishonoring, 1 Pet 3:7
 - Stinginess, Prov 21:13; Luke 6:38
 - Unbelief & doubt, James 1:5-7
 - Unforgiveness, Matt 5:23; Mark 11:25

Personal Prayer Analysis

- **Spiritual analysis**
 - Have you ignored God? Jer 7:13
 - Have you actually prayed? Jam 4:2
 - Have you unreconciled relationships? Matt 5:23f
 - Do you have selfish motives? Jam 4:3
 - Have you made an enemy of God? Jam 4:4
- **Practical analysis**
 - Does your need require action of someone else?
 - Do you need to change? Are you willing?
- **Realities**
 - God is not Santa Claus or a vending machine
 - God's glory must be first priority, 1 Cor 10:11
 - God's purpose is more vital than your pleasure

Keys to Effective Prayer



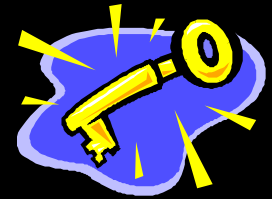
- **Pray first**
 - **God first, not an afterthought (Isa 8:19; Matt 6:33; Gal 1:15-16; 1 Tim 2:1; cf. Josh 9:14)**
- **Pray with humility**
 - **Recognize G-d's sovereignty**
 - **Glorify God (John 14:13)**
 - **Recognize need for mercy (Luke 18:13)**
- **Pray explicitly**
 - **Ask what you really desire (Ps 37:4; 1 Sam 1:10-11; John 14:13f)**
 - **Ask according to Torah (1 John 5:14f)**
 - **You cannot embarrass God with your requests.**

Keys to Effective Prayer



- **Pray in faith**
 - **Believing in God's power (Heb 11:6)**
 - **Trusting in God's goodness & sovereign care (Ps 130:5; Rom 8:28)**
 - **Expecting God to answer (Isaiah 58:9; Jam 1:6)**
 - **Submitting to G-d's sovereign will (Rom 1:10; James 4:15)**
 - **Remaining faithful while waiting**

Keys to Effective Prayer



- **Pray with perseverance**
 - **God invites persistence**
 - “Give Him no rest,” Isaiah 62:7
 - “day and night,” Luke 18:1
 - **God honors persistence**
 - Abraham, Genesis 18:27
 - Isaac, Genesis 25:21
 - **Keep asking, Matt 7:7-8; Mark 11:24; Luke 18:1**
 - **Pray until God says “no,” 2 Cor 12:8-9**
 - **Maintain prayer life, 1 Thess 5:17**
 - **Remain faithful while waiting**

Lessons Learned

- **The Perfection of Patience**
 - God waits for us, Isa 30:18, 1 John 3:22
 - We wait for God, Ps 37:7; Isa 40:31; 1 Pet 5:10
- **The Process of Progress**
 - Spiritual maturity takes time, 1 John 2:12-14
 - Developing a prayer life likewise takes time
- **The Precious Privilege**
 - What is not cherished may be lost
 - Prayer reflects our hunger for God, Ps 84:2

B'rakhah for Prayer

- *Ba-rookh a-tah A-do-ni, E-lo-hay-noo me-lekh ha-o-lam, a-sher keed-sha-noo b'mitz-vo-tav, v'tsee-va-noo al t'fee-lah.*
- **Blessed are you, *Adonai*, King of the universe, who sanctifies us with your commandments and commanded us concerning prayer.**