



# Principles of Effective Prayer

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## Caveat

- **Assumption**
  - Scripture is the only standard for determining 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
- **Terms**
  - Yeshua = Jesus
  - Besekh = New Testament

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## 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?

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## 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; 1Jn 3:22; Jas 5:16
  - All receive favor without asking, Matt 5:45; Jas 1:17
- **Responses in Scripture**
  - YES, Luke 1:13; Matt 8:3 (many others)
  - NO, Deut 3:25-26; Luke 12:13-14; 2Cor 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

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## 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; 2Cor 1:11
- **The Promise of Prayer**
  - God will see, Matt 6:6
  - God will hear, Ps 5:3; 2Chr 7:14
  - God will answer, Isa 65:24; Jer 33:3; 1Jn 5:15
- **The Power of Prayer, Eph 3:20; Jas 5:16**
  - More than you ask
  - More than you can imagine
  - More than you're able to do

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## Meaning of Prayer

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

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## Categories of Prayer

- **Expressions**
  - Individual
  - Small group
  - Congregation
- **Types of Prayer**
  - Blessings and praise
  - Thanksgiving
  - Lament
  - Petition
  - Supplication
  - Intercession

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## 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**
  - **God:** Enthroned in glory, surrounded by angels
  - **We:** Face-to-face with holy scrutiny
  - ∴ Recognize the weight of leading in public

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## 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**
  - Inner room, Matt 6:6 – idiom of privacy
  - In the outdoors, Luke 5:16
- **Pray with plainness**
  - Begin with blessing and praise
  - Use economy of words, Matt 6:7
  - Avoid manipulation or deal-making

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## Blessing (Heb. *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 blessings**
  - Blessings for spiritual benefits
  - Blessings for sustenance
  - Blessings for others
  - Blessings for things we enjoy
- **Why offer blessings?**
  - To recognize the presence of God in life
  - To acknowledge dependency on God
  - To acknowledge the true source of good things
  - To help us toward an active life in the service of God

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## Personal Need Prayers

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

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## 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

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## A Dangerous Prayer

- **Your kingdom come**
  - Will you surrender your rights?
- **Your will be done**
  - Is Scripture 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?

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## Aids to Prayer

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

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## Hindrances to Effective Prayer

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

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## Personal Prayer Analysis

- **Spiritual analysis**
  - Have you ignored God? Jer 7:13
  - Have you actually prayed? Jas 4:2
  - Have you unreconciled relationships? Matt 5:23f
  - Do you have selfish motives? Jas 4:3
  - Have you made an enemy of God? Jas 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, 1Cor 10:11
  - God's purpose is more vital than your pleasure

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## Keys to Effective Prayer



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

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## Keys to Effective Prayer



- **Pray in faith**
  - Believe in God's power, Heb 11:6
  - Trust in God's goodness & sovereign care, Ps 130:5; Rom 8:28
  - Expect God to answer, Isa 58:9; Jas 1:6
  - Submit to God's sovereign will, Rom 1:10; Jas 4:15
  - Remain faithful while waiting

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## Keys to Effective Prayer



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

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## Lessons Learned

- **The Perfection of Patience**
  - God waits for us, Isa 30:18, 1Jn 3:22
  - We wait for God, Ps 37:7; Isa 40:31; 1Pet 5:10
- **The Process of Progress**
  - Spiritual maturity takes time, 1Jn 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

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## Part II: Combat of Prayer

- Spiritual Warfare
- Spiritual Weapons
- Spiritual Watchmen



“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving, be made for all people.” 1Tim 2:1 NIV



## A. Spiritual Warfare

“10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you are able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:10-12 TLV



## Overview on War

- **Definition of War**
  - Violence to compel submission
  - Employs the utmost use of force
- **History of War Against God**
  - The reality – war declared
  - Began in creation, Gen 3:1; Ezk 28:15-16
  - Unseen as well as seen, Rev 12:7, 17
  - Continues until the end, Dan 9:26
- **Resources for Study**
  - Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. BC
  - Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 1832
  - Henry Morris, *The Long War Against God*
  - Kurt Koch, *Occult ABC*



## Key Ideas, Ephesians 6:10-12

- 6:10 – The royal power
  - Emphasized three ways
    - Be strong – be empowered
    - Mighty – might
    - Strength
- 6:11 – The right equipment
  - Note military terms
- 6:12 – The real enemy
  - “Not flesh and blood”
  - Yeshua and the apostles suffered at the hands of men
  - Cause: powers of darkness

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## What is Spiritual Warfare?

- Spiritual – Grk. *pneumatikos*, Eph 6:12
  - Occurs 26 times in Besekh
  - The noun is plural
  - Only here is it connected to evil
  - “Spiritual” never occurs with “war”
  - Intention likely refers to evil spirits
- Common Definition
  - Evil powers opposing God
  - Soul struggles against evil
  - Manifested in multiple ways, including
    - Demonic possession or oppression
    - Attacks on a person's life with God
    - Afflictions of physical or psychological nature
  - Yet, spiritual warfare is broader in scope

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## A War on Multiple Fronts

- **Supra-terrestrial**
  - Satan's forces, Eph 2:2; 6:12; Col 2:15
  - War in the heavens, Rev 12:7
- **Unregenerate world**
  - World system, Acts 4:26; Eph 6:12; 1Jn 5:19
  - Unbelievers, Matt 10:36 ; 2Cor 4:4; Php 3:18
- **Within our relationships**
  - Eph 5:1 – 6:9; Jas 4:1-2
  - Community, congregation & home
- **Within ourselves**
  - Conflicting desires & priorities, Rom 8:5-8
    - Good inclination vs. evil inclination

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## The Conduct of War

- **Opposing Purposes**
  - God: Crown Yeshua as King, Php 2:10
  - Satan: be equal with God, Isa 14:13-14
- **Opposing methods to conduct war**
  - Means: destroy war-making ability
  - God: destroy sin, 1Jn 3:8
  - Satan: destroy people, John 10:10
  - Tactics: different weapons, 2Cor 10:3
- **Order of Battle**
  - Each side is highly organized to plan and fight the war, Eph 6:12; Heb 12:22-24
- **Principles of War (See Sun Tzu & Clausewitz)**
  - Following principles determine success

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## Principles of War (Clausewitz)

- **Objective**
  - Direct efforts toward a defined, decisive and attainable objective (Matt 10:5-6; Acts 1:8)
- **Offensive**
  - Seize, retain & exploit the initiative (Matt 28:19-20)
- **Mass**
  - Concentrate overwhelming power at the decisive place and time (Acts 12:5; Eph 6:18)
- **Economy of Force**
  - Employ all personnel effectively (1Cor 12:4-7)
- **Simplicity**
  - Prepare clear, uncomplicated plans (Matt 10:7-14)

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## Principles of War (cont.)

- **Maneuver**
  - Flexible use of military power (Luke 14:31; Acts 16:6-10; 1Th 2:18-3:3)
- **Security**
  - Don't allow the enemy unexpected advantage (Eph 4:27; 1Tim 3:7)
- **Surprise**
  - Strike when and where or in a manner for which the enemy is unprepared (Col 2:15; 1Pet 4:12)
- **Unity**
  - There must be unity of command and effort (Matt 28:18; John 17:20-23; Eph 4:3)

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## Stratagems

"All warfare is based on deception" Sun Tzu (544-496 BC)

- **Deception of Satan**
  - Satan is a liar and father of lies, John 8:44
    - "The serpent deceived me," Gen 3:13
  - An angel of light who "deceives the whole world," 2Cor 11:14; Rev 12:9
- **God does keep secrets**
  - "The secret things belong to God," Deut 29:29
  - "that day and hour no one knows," Matt 24:36
  - Yeshua did not trust unbelievers, John 2:24
  - Yeshua went to the feast secretly, John 7:10
  - Beware of those who predict the future; God's sovereign plans are secret for a reason.

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## Levels of Spiritual Warfare

Military theorists classify war according to intensity.

- **Low-intensity war (Guerrilla warfare)**
  - Temptation, Matt 4:1; 1Cor 7:5
  - Accusations to God, Job 1:9; Zech 3:1; Rev 12:10
  - Snatches seed sown & sows tares, Matt 13:19-39
  - Hindering plans, 1Th 2:18
  - Disturb confidence, 2Th 2:2
- **Mid-intensity war (limited objectives)**
  - Opposing God's plans, Matt 16:23
  - Lying to the Holy Spirit, Acts 5:3
  - Occult oppression, Acts 5:16
  - Terrorizing, 1Sam 16:14; 1Pet 5:8
  - Physical afflictions, Luke 13:16
  - False doctrines, 1Tim 4:1

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## Levels of Spiritual Warfare

- **High-intensity war (full-scale war)**
  - Demonic possession, Matt 8:16, 28; 9:32; 12:22
  - State-sponsored persecution, Matt 24:9; Acts 7:9-10; 20:23; Rev 13:7
  - Pre-millennial War, Rev 17:14; 19:11-19;
  - Post-millennial War, Rev 20:8

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## Impact of Spiritual Warfare

- **Strategic Level**
  - Requires God to work in secret, Matt 24:36
  - Requires God to reveal only partially, 1Cor 13:12
  - God still works all things together for our good and His glory, Rom 8:28
- **Congregational Level**
  - Fosters indecision
  - Threatens unity, 1Cor 1:10; Jas 4:1
  - Impedes outreach, 2Cor 4:4
- **Personal Level**
  - Threatens confidence in God, Jas 1:5-8; 1Pet 1:16
  - Weakens discipleship, Jas 1:12-16

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## How should we respond to this war?

- **Congregational Level**
  - Task organize leadership
  - Educate disciples, 1Cor 14:3, 8
  - Recognize & facilitate spiritual gifts
  - Make plans to support the Mission
  - Strengthen unity
- **Personal Level**
  - Recognize the cost
  - Stand firm: no denial; no appeasement
  - Commit to victory over sin
  - Develop spiritual disciplines

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## B. Spiritual Weapons

“13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist when the times are evil, and after you have done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm then! Buckle the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. 15 Strap up your feet in readiness with the Good News of shalom. 16 Above all, take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:13-17 TLV



## Keys to Victory

- **Begin Preparation**
  - Know yourself & know the enemy, 1Jn 5:19
  - Obtain guidance, Prov 20:18; 24:6; Eccl 9:18
  - Engage in training, Ps 144:1
- **Believe in Victory**
  - Present victory, 1Cor 15:57; 2Cor 2:14; 1Jn 5:4
  - Future victory, Rom 16:20; Rev 17:14; 19:11
- **Believe in the Commander, Ps 27:1-3**
  - Yeshua is our Light
  - Yeshua is our Salvation
  - Yeshua is our Defense

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## Ready for War

- **Cohesive Organization, Eph 5:1–6:9**
  - Rank structure in God's plan
  - Submission to levels of authority expected
- **Defensive weapons, Eph 6:10-17a (cf. 2Cor 6:7; 10:4)**
  - Girdle – Truth
  - Breastplate – Righteousness
  - Sandals – Readiness to offer shalom
  - Shield – Trusting in God's faithfulness
  - Helmet – Assurance of salvation
- **Offensive weapon, Eph 6:17b (cf. 2Cor 6:7; 10:4)**
  - Sword – Word of God (cf. Heb 4:12)

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## C. Spiritual Watchmen

“18 as you pray at all times, with all kinds of prayers and requests, in the Spirit, vigilantly and persistently, for all God’s people. 19 And pray for me, too, that whenever I open my mouth, the words will be given to me to be bold in making known the secret of the Good News, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may speak boldly, the way I should. ”  
Ephesians 6:18-20 CJB



## Ministry of Intercession

- **Communicate with the Commander**
  - Weapons must be employed with prayer
  - Note: “all” occurs four times (or every)
    - With all prayer and petition (or “every kind”)
    - In every time in spirit
    - With all perseverance
    - For all the saints
- **Connect the Commander to Others**
  - To bridge heaven and earth, Deut 5:5
  - To appeal to God on behalf of someone, Isa 62:6
  - To bear burdens, Gal 6:2
  - To protect the weak, 1Th 5:14; Heb 12:12-13
  - To preserve peace, Jer 29:7; 1Tim 2:2



## Weakness and Strength

- Our weakness, Romans 8:18-26
  - We groan for redemption
  - We have physical limitations
  - We have vulnerabilities
  - We don't know what others really need
  - We don't know the future
- His strength, Eph 6:10
  - He works through us, Heb 7:28; 11:34
  - His power increases through our weakness, 2Cor 12:10
  - Intercession of the Spirit, Rom 8:26
  - Intercession of Yeshua, Rom 8:34

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## Divine Intercession

- Holy Spirit, Rom 8:26-27
  - Present with us
  - Intercession depicts rescue
  - Helps us to pray in our weakness
  - Pleads on our behalf
  - Translates the groanings of our spirits
- Yeshua, Rom 8:34
  - Seated in heaven
  - High priestly ministry, Heb 2:17; 7:25
  - Prays for victory over attacks, Luke 22:32
  - Sympathizes with our weakness, Heb 4:15
  - Pleads for development of virtues, John 17
  - Advocate if we sin, 1Jn 2:1
  - Provides perpetual atonement, Heb 7:27

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## Combat Intercession

Four kinds of intercession may be identified:

- Community Intercession
- Spiritual Intercession
- Ministry Intercession
- Deliverance Intercession

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## Community Intercession

- For rulers & government
  - 1 Timothy 2:1-4
  - For their salvation
  - For a quiet life
- For the community shalom
  - Jeremiah 29:7
  - “its welfare is your welfare”
- For the reputation of disciples
  - Hebrews 13:18

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## Spiritual Intercession

- For God's people
  - Job, Job 42:7-10 ("friends")
  - Moses, Ex 32:31-32; Num 11:1-3 (Israel)
  - Daniel, Dan 9:3-21 (Israel)
  - Paul, Rom 10:1 (Israel)
- For God's presence
  - Moses, Ex 33:11-17
- For God's power
  - Moses, Num 11:29
- For God's perfection
  - Paul, Col 4:12

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## Ministry Intercession

- For ministry opportunities
  - 1Cor 16:9; Col 4:3-4; 2Th 3:1; Rev 3:8
- For ministry workers
  - Matt 9:37-38; Acts 6:6; 13:3
- For ministry boldness
  - Eph 6:19-20 (cf. Acts 4:29)
  - For mystery of the good news
  - For appropriateness of speech
- For ministry safety
  - Rom 15:30-31
- For ministry unity
  - 1Tim 2:8

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## Deliverance Intercession

- Deliverance from temptation
  - Matt 6:13; 2Pet 2:7-9
- Deliverance from Satan's schemes
  - Dan 2:17-18; Luke 22:32; John 17:15; Php 1:19
- Deliverance from persecution
  - Acts 12:5-16; 16:25-26; Php 1:19
- Deliverance from occult oppression
  - Mark 9:29
- Deliverance from deception
  - 2Sam 15:31; Eph 1:18

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## Keys to Effective Prayer



- Pray with authority
  - Pray in the name of Yeshua, John 14:6, 12-14
  - Not a magic formula
  - The promise is for disciples
- Pray boldly
  - Pray big and aggressively
  - Gen 18:27; Ex 32:32; Luke 11:5-9; Acts 4:24-31
- Pray alertly
  - Expect the struggle, Col 4:12
  - Exercise self-control, 1Pet 4:7

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## Keys to Effective Prayer



- **Pray in the Spirit**
  - **Worship in the Spirit**, John 4:20-24
  - **Intercession of the Spirit**, Rom 8:26; Eph 2:18
  - **Illumination of the Spirit**, John 15:13; Rom 8:5-6
  - **Inspiration of the Spirit**, Eph 6:18; 1Cor 2:10-16
- **Pray in Unity**
  - **Yeshua's priority**, John 17:20-22
  - **Heaven responds to unity**
    - "if two agree," Matt 18:19-20 (solutions; Deut 1:17)
    - "strive together in prayer," 2Cor 1:11 (deliverance)
    - "that God may open a door," Col 4:3 (opportunities)

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## Keys to Effective Prayer



- **With blessing**
  - **God's power is released by praise**
  - Php 4:6; Col 4:2; 1Tim 2:1; Heb 13:15
- **Pray with fasting**
  - **Definition**
    - "Afflict one's soul," Lev 16:29
    - Not just abstaining from food
  - **Intensive Prayer**
    - "Prayer and fasting" means "prayer and more prayer"
  - **Reasons to fast**
    - To humble oneself
    - To mourn over sin and seek divine mercy
    - To prevent or deliver from calamity

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## Pray with Power

- **An Army of one**
  - Elijah, Jas 5:17
  - Anna, Luke 2:37
- **Small team prayer – 2 or 3**
  - Daniel and 3 friends, Dan 2:17-18
  - Isaiah & Hezekiah, 2Chr. 32:20,
  - Yeshua, Peter, John, & Jacob, Luke 9:28
  - Paul & Silas, Acts 16:25
- **Large group prayer**
  - 120+, Acts 1:14
  - Community, Acts 2:42; 4:24; 12:5, 12

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**Remember – we're on the  
winning side!  
So, pray and keep on praying!**

