

Mechanics of Prayer

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice”
(Psalm 55:17).

Introduction

Many times, people hesitate to pray unless they are in a given place, at the right time, with the perfect situation. They feel they must kneel, fold their hands, close their eyes, and speak aloud for the Lord to hear them. But this is a mistake. God is more interested in our heart or motive, as always. “...for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7b).

“Most men pray for power, the strength to do things. Few people pray for love, the quality to be someone.” – Robert D. Foster

What Counts With God

How does it all fit together (that is what mechanics are) in this prayer business? During His most often quoted “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus took time to teach His followers how they should go about the process of praying.

The Attitude of Prayer: (Matthew 6:5-8)

- ☞ Not seen of men (done in secret)
- ☞ Not boasting of our closeness to God (we have already gained our reward by the acclaim of men)
- ☞ To be heard by God without much repetition and long speaking. (Jesus states that the heathen believe the more they speak the more chance they have of being heard.)

“Prayer is not a substitute for working, thinking, watching, suffering, or giving: prayer is a support for all other efforts.” – George Buttrick

☞ God knows what we need even before we ask. He just wants us to communicate with Him, but that includes listening to His voice, and not just hearing our own.

The Example of Prayer: (Matthew 6:9-13)

The disciples knew that the followers of John the Baptist said many prayers, fasted often, and were devoted to John. They came to Jesus asking Him to teach them how to pray, and so we have the most famous prayer in the Bible. It is the “Lord’s Prayer” and has been misused by many. Jesus did not mean for His disciples to just memorize and repeat after Him this same

prayer every time they prayed. He was giving them a formula (pattern) to follow about things that should be important and included in all their prayers. The Lord's Prayer contains three petitions concerned with the holiness and will of God and three concerning our personal needs. Let us look at this model prayer in different segments:

- 📖 *"Our Father which art in heaven"* – This acknowledges God as superior to all things and each of us (Matthew 6:9).
- 📖 *"Hallowed by thy name"* – We give worship to Him for blessings – magnify His Holy name (Matthew 6:9).
- 📖 *"Thy kingdom come"* – Consecration to Him, and surrender to God's will in our daily lives (Matthew 6:10).
- 📖 *"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"* – Submit to His will, let God lead and direct our lives, plans, actions, and thoughts. In heaven, nobody argues with God's design and plan. We should not here on earth either (Matthew 6:10).
- 📖 *"Give us this day our daily bread"* – We petition God for our needs. But notice that it is not for all of our needs for the rest of our lives, but for our needs today (Matthew 6:11).
- 📖 *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"* – We petition God for mercy, but notice that God's forgiveness is connected with our forgiveness of those who wrong us (Matthew 6:12).
- 📖 *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"* – We petition God for protection from the devil and all forces of evil (Matthew 6:13).
- 📖 *"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever"* – We praise the Lord for He alone is worthy (Matthew 6:13)!
- 📖 *"Amen"* – We close our prayer with confidence that we have prayed according to His will and plan for us (Matthew 6:13).

"Lord, make me more like Yourself, less like myself." – Lester Case

The Time of Prayer:

Every believer should pray, but when you pray is up to you. However, the Bible does tell us on several different occasions, that we should pray *always, without ceasing, constantly*. No matter what time of day it is – it is time to pray. No matter where you are – that is a place of prayer. No matter what is happening around you – that is a reason for prayer.

- 📖 Always (Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18)
- 📖 Without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- 📖 With importunity (persistence) (Luke 11:5-10)
- 📖 Continuing instant (Romans 12:12)
- 📖 Continually (Colossians 4:2)

What Can Hinder My Prayers?

Is it possible that I can pray and it will not do me any good? Is there anything that can keep my prayers from reaching heaven and the ears of God? Oh, yes. There are a number of things that can block my prayers. I need to know what they are to avoid them.

- 📖 Un-confessed sin (Psalm 66:18)
- 📖 Insincerity (Matthew 6:5)
- 📖 Carnal Motives (James 4:3)
- 📖 Unbelief (James 1:5-6)
- 📖 Satanic Activity (Daniel 10:10-13)
- 📖 Domestic Problems (1 Peter 3:7)
- 📖 Pride (Luke 8:10-14)
- 📖 Robbing God (Malachi 3:8-10)
- 📖 Refusing to Submit to Biblical Teaching (Proverbs 1:24-28; Zechariah 7:11-14)
- 📖 Refusing to Forgive or be Forgiven (Matthew 5:23-24; 6:12-14)
- 📖 Refusing to Help the Needy (Proverbs 21:3; 1John 3:16-17)

As with every other type of mechanics, the “mechanics” of prayer are the tools that make it work if we use them.

“Let’s not just study about it, read up on it, or discuss it; let us pray!”
(Linda Poitras)

Study Questions

1. According to Matthew 6:5-8, what are four (4) points to remember and practice about prayer.

- 1) _____
- _____
- 2) _____
- _____
- 3) _____
- _____
- 4) _____
- _____

2. Using the following excerpts from the pattern of prayer given by Jesus to His followers in Matthew 6:9-13, what does each phrase mean?

- 1) “Our Father which art in heaven” _____
- _____
- 2) “Thy kingdom come” _____
- _____
- 3) “Hallowed be thy name” _____
- _____

4) "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" _____

5) "Give us this day our daily bread" _____

6) "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever" _____

7) "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" _____

8) "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" _____

9) "Amen" _____

3. Give five (5) times (with Scripture reference) that the Bible tells us we should pray.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

4. List eleven (11) things (with Scripture reference) that can block personal prayer.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____
- 11) _____

Additional Notes
