

Prayer

Two ultimate tests of true spirituality:

(1) The study of the Word

The study of the Word comes first because we won't know how to pray unless we know what the Bible teaches about God, His will, and our lives and problems.

(2) Prayer

These two great pillars hold up the believer.

(Acts 6:4 *But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*)

The reason you pray, and the reason God answers is to put His glory on display. His glory is the issue! (John 14:13 *Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*)

Pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17)

What is **not taught** about prayer in scripture:

The posture, place, times, or circumstances of prayer.

The **pattern** of prayer is taught: Mat 6:9-13, Luke 11:1-5. The context in Matthew was, Chapter 5 – “your theology is inadequate” (kingdom, law, love, perfection is required), Chapter 6 – “your religious activities are inadequate” (giving, praying, fasting).

How **not** to pray:

A vehicle for display

(Mat 6:5...*for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by ... But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret*)

Conditional Prayer If you – then I will

Meaningless repetition (Mat 6:7)

Misunderstanding “in the name of Jesus”

Jewish concept of “name”= a person’s character (1 Sam 18:30 David’s name was much esteemed), (Exodus 24:5-7, the Lord proclaimed His name, saying, “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping in mercy ..., forgiving iniquity...”), Psalm 9:10, Psalm 7:17, (John 17:6, “I have magnified Thy name”)

Misunderstanding “thy will be done”

Bitter resentment (lack of knowledge), passive resignation(lack of faith), theological(it’s all settled anyway – lack of understanding).

God’s will = purpose(universe), desire(unbelievers), command(Christians)

General Issues:

Prayer in the New Testament is mentioned 28 times.

Prayer on the internet > 98,400,000 (up from 11,200,000 hits 2007 and 7,770,000 since March 03).

Intercessory prayer (enteuxus - petition rendered on the behalf of others)

Prayer ministries, Prayer trees, Prayer rooms/ Prayer partners/ Prayer warriors

Pray Down At High-Noon, Praying the Price, Pray for Peace

Sovereign foreordination of God and the efficacy of Prayer

God's will/choice - answer to prayer

Some books:

"The Power of Prayer on Plants", "I Talked With Spirits", "Unmasking the New Age", Groothuis, "How to Pray", R.A. Torrey, "The Disciples Prayer", MacArthur

Addressee of Prayer (Can we pray to Mary, our departed relatives, saints?)

Dial-A-Prayer, N.V. Peale

1-900 Prayer Line (we could make \$0.75 a call)

ACTS - Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication

Public/Corporate Prayer

Intercession of the Holy Spirit:

Romans 8:26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Pray for all men

I Timothy 2:1-6. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;...

Examples of Prayer from Scripture:

Mat 6:9-13 The Lord's (Disciples) Prayer

Mat 26:36-44 Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane

Luke 18:9-14 Prayers of Pharisee and Publican

Luke 23:42 The thief's prayer

John 17 – Jesus' High Priestly Prayer

Hebrews 7:25 "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Acts 4:24-31 The Disciples' Prayer

Eph 3:14-21 Paul's prayer for believers

2 Tim 1:3-7 Paul's prayer for Timothy

Some interesting/famous prayers:

"Lord, if you have to break their back to get them to come to you, break their back Jesus, take their business away from them, but save them. God, if it takes a car wreck to save them, do it Lord. Show them, even if they have to get cancer."

(Luke 9:53-56, "And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.")

The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr, aka "The Serenity Prayer"

Third Army Chaplain – Patton Weather Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies and establish Thy justice among men and nations.

Chinese Student's Prayer

God bless all those that I love;
God bless all those that love me.
God bless all those that love those that I love
And all those that love those that love me.

From an old New England Samler

O Lord, convert the world - and begin with me.

St. Richard of Chishesterr

Day by day, O Lord, three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly,
follow thee more clearly,
day by day.