



CONNECT

FIRST STEPS - LESSON 5: PRAYER



Objectives

- New believers to realise that a close relationship with God is one of the most important and privileged aspects of their Christian walk.
- New believers to cultivate a healthy prayer lifestyle.

Introduction

Breathing is a miracle we do not stop to think about very much. We just do it. It keeps us alive. In the same amazing way God has given us as Christians a way to “breathe spiritually” for our spiritual well-being. Spiritual breathing, like physical breathing, is a process of exhaling the impure and inhaling the pure. It can become a way of life.

To become a Christian means to have a new personal relationship with God the Creator. It is not to follow a new religion, neither is to perform rituals or try to follow one kind of religious laws. As Christians, we have a personal relationship with God. We can have a relationship with God by talking to Him. We can directly talk to God by using our own words. Christians have the privilege to be close to God and have personal conversations with Him.

Why Do Christians Pray?

1. Prayer is a command of the Lord – an essential practice in our Christian lives

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Prayer is also a normal part of the Christian's life. In **Matthew 6:5-13** Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. Jesus said “*but when you pray*”, instead of saying “*if you pray*”. We can see that prayer is a normal part of the daily Christian life.

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 others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But 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. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matthew 6:5-13

Our Lord Jesus has set a good example of a consistent prayer life. He himself, who is God in the form of man, also prayed to the Father. Therefore, prayer is an essential practice in our Christian lives.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35

2. Prayer brings help in time of need

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Luke 11:9-10

King Jehoshaphat, after praying to God for deliverance, sent singers out in front of the army, singing praises to God. They sang, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever" (**2 Chronicles 20:21**). And their enemies attacked one another. Jehoshaphat understood what it meant to present his petition to God with thanksgiving.

3. Prayer strengthens us against temptations

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Mark 14:38

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Matthew 6:13

This does not mean that God tempts His children, for it is not part of His character.

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.

James 1:13-14

In this petition, we are asking God to guide and strengthen us so that we will not get out of His will and place ourselves in the way of temptation. In essence, we are saying, "*Lord, do not let me be tempted above my capacity to resist.*"

4. Prayer brings us to God for physical and spiritual healing

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

James 5:15-16

When we are praying for physical and spiritual healing, we are coming to God completely surrendered and expectant to let His Holy Spirit work in and through us.

5. Prayer helps us to personally know God more

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

Jeremiah 33:3

The Components Of Prayer

We approach Him in prayer with faith.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

The following are important components of prayer (this list, covering the commonest forms, is by no means exhaustive):

1. Adore God through praising Him in words and songs

We praise God for who He is and for what He has done for us. There are many things for which we can praise Him. We praise Him because He is just and faithful. We praise Him because He is merciful and He loves us. We praise for He is mighty. Every time we pray we should praise God for who He is.

*Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.
Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples.*
Psalm 96:1-3

2. Confess our sins

We should confess our sins, whether it is a small sin or a serious sin, whether it is a sin against man or God. We commit sin when we disobey God and behave in a manner that is below God's standard

Confession of sin will deliver us from the bondage of sin. Therefore, Christians should always confess their sins in their prayers.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
1 John 1:9

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
Psalm 32:1

3. Thanksgiving – Thank God for the daily blessings He has showered upon us

We should show our gratitude towards God. There are many blessings for which we can give thanks to the Lord, for example, good health and provision. The most important thing that we should thank Him for is the "salvation" that we received from God through the death of Jesus. We should never stop being thankful towards the Lord. In thanksgiving, we acknowledge that He is the owner of our lives.

*Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
Ephesians 5:20

Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.
Psalm 106:1

4. Supplication or petition to God regarding our daily needs

As Christians we have the right to ask God for our needs because we are His children. Since we have a father-son relationship with God, we can ask of Him. However, we must ask according to His will.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 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!

Matthew 7:7-11

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 14:13-14

Do you see the acronym ACTS in the above? We communicate with God in our prayer life by not only talking to Him but also listening to Him.

5. Listening to God

Conversation is a two-way communication. The first four components are our communication to God. We should receive His message or words too. God can communicate to us in many ways. God speaks to us through other Christians. Most of the time, God speaks directly to us through our spirits or impress upon our hearts with directions and insights. Therefore, one important component of our devotional time is to listen to His voice. We let Him speak to us by listening to Him and prayerfully reading the Bible.

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

Reflection Station

1. What answered prayers can I give thanks to God for?

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

2. What are some of the things I can pray for myself as well as for the people around me?

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

1 John 5:14-15

Ask things according to God's will! Do not ask with wrong or evil desires such as taking revenge on someone. Ask for God's wisdom in work or studies, salvation of close friends / family members, joy in daily living.

Start a prayer journal, and you will be amazed by God, his nature – faithfulness.

Mentor Chat

1. Do I need to set aside time to pray daily?

Even though we can talk (pray) to God at any time and any place, it is very important for us to have a specific time to pray on a daily basis. Jesus and King David always woke up early in the morning to pray to God.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35

In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

Psalm 5:3

We should also choose a place where we can pray with undivided attention towards God. In **Matthew 6**, Jesus taught us how to pray (**read Matthew 6:5-15**).

But 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.

Matthew 6:6

2. What if I run out of things to pray?

Conclusion

Talking to God in prayer is an intrinsic part of the normal Christian life because it is one way that we can have fellowship with God. God is our heavenly Father (**John 1:12**). Just as it is abnormal for a son to not talk to his father, Christians should not cease having conversations with our heavenly Father either.

*Prayer is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength,
the honour of a Christian.*

Charles Spurgeon

Prayer should be as natural as breathing, without it we die spiritually.

Memory Verse

REJOICE ALWAYS, PRAY CONTINUALLY, GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES; FOR THIS IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18



HOPE
CHURCH

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, sorted in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the church. Requests for permissions or further information should be addressed to the office@hope-church.com.au.

Scripture quotations (unless otherwise indicated) are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.