

3. Write a brief description of what each line in the model prayer above represents.

4. Write below a brief prayer of your own for today.

5. Make a list of the things you want to remember to pray for.

6. Try praying while you read your Bible. Let God speak to you through His Word.

Check when done.

7. Try praying while you take a walk.

Check when done.

8. You can pray anytime, even while engaging in other activities. If you wake up during the night, talk to your Heavenly Father before going back to sleep. You don't have to always pray out loud. God understands your thoughts. Try it.

Check when done.

9. It is also a good habit to thank God before food before you eat.

10. When you pray, remember that sincerity with God is very important. You cannot fool God. He knows your heart.

NOTE: Please do not become discouraged if you do not become an "expert" immediately. It may take a little time and practice. It is the beginning of a life-long habit. You will be glad you persisted.

Lesson Three Talking with God

(Learning How to Pray)

WHAT IS PRAYER?

A Definition:

Prayer is simply talking to God and listening to Him. It is like having a conversation with a good friend.

What a privilege!

It is an incredible privilege to be invited to talk to the Creator of the universe. He wants to hear from you. He always listens when you pray. He is never too busy to hear you. He has invited you to address Him as Father, and has promised to respond when you ask with a right motive.

Monologue or dialogue?

God not only delights in hearing you, He often has something He wants to say to you if you open your heart to listen. He wants to give you the guidance and wisdom you need.

WHY IS PRAYER IMPORTANT?

It is a key to victorious living.

There is no other element more vital to Christian living than prayer. The beginning of failure in the Christian life can almost always be traced to the neglect of prayer. As we pray, God becomes real to us. Prayer is our connection to the resources we need. It is the God-appointed means through which we receive the inspiration and strength to face the realities of life. Countless blessings are lost due to the neglect of prayer.

Prayer had a prominent place in the teaching of Jesus.

Jesus knew how vital prayer would be in the lives of His disciples. He gave careful attention to teaching them how to pray.

Prayer was important to Jesus himself.

Jesus prayed often; sometimes early in the morning, sometimes all night, before making decisions (like choosing His disciples), and in Gethsemane just before facing his crucifixion. If He needed it so much, how much more we need it!

Prayer makes it possible for God to work.

Although we do not fully understand it, but prayer moves God to action. Great spiritual victories are always preceded by prayer. Things happen when we pray that otherwise would not happen.

Prayer is an arm of defense against the enemy.

All Christians will come under attack from the enemy (Satan), but God has not left us defenseless. God has given us a powerful weapon with which to defend ourselves. When seeking to defeat us, the enemy will often try to disarm us first. Once you are defenseless your defeat is much easier.

Prayer is the door to spiritual blessing.

God's promises to His children are "very great and precious" (2 Peter 1:4). He has a wonderful plan of blessing for your life. It is prayer that opens the door to these rich blessings. How tragic it would be to miss them.

Your prayer life is an indicator of your spiritual condition.

Like a thermometer that reflects the condition of your health, your prayer life reflects your general spiritual condition. Prayer is essential to spiritual health. When it is neglected, a person is entering a danger zone. You cannot maintain spiritual victory very long without prayer.

THE ELEMENTS OF PRAYER

There are various elements that we normally include in our prayers:

1. Praise

Praise is the human reaction to thinking about God. It is essentially recognizing God for who He is. When you think of His greatness, majesty, and power it will inspire reverence and awe. Meditating on His love (and other attributes) will make you marvel at how great He is. It pleases God when we approach Him with praise on our lips. It is the most appropriate way to come into His presence.

2. Thanksgiving

It is not hard to find many reasons for which to thank God. All good things come from Him! (Food, clothing, shelter, sunshine, beauty, health, your friends and family, your job, etc., etc., etc.). If you enjoy it, thank Him for it! Do not forget to thank Him for your salvation.

3. Personal requests

Now you may talk to God about your needs and desires. Feel free to open your heart to Him. He has invited you to do it. Tell Him where you are hurting. Explain your frustrations, fears, and confusion. Ask for help with your weaknesses. Claim His promises.

4. The needs of others

When we pray for others it is called "intercessory prayer." It is a good idea to keep a list of the people for whom you are praying, and their needs. Remember your family and loved ones, your friends, your church, national leaders, etc.

5. Commitment

Somewhere in your prayer you can reaffirm your commitment to love, serve, and obey God. If you have failed God at some point, confess it immediately and ask for forgiveness. Like having a flat tire, it is better to fix it immediately than to drive on expecting to fix it later.

6. Listen

Proper prayer should be like good conversation: one person should not do all the talking. Take time to listen to what God may want to say to you. Open your mind, search your heart. Invite God to reveal to you what He wants to do in your heart and life. If He brings to your mind a change He wants to make, thank him for it. If He shows you something He wants you to do, be quick to obey. He wants to use you, and to make you the best you can be.

A MODEL PRAYER

The disciples were so impressed with the prayers of Jesus they came to Him one day with the request, "Lord, teach us to pray." He responded by giving them a model to follow:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."
(Matthew 6:9-13)

SOME THINGS TO DO

- 1. Memorize the titles of the 6 basic elements in prayer above.**
Knowing them by heart will help you remember what to say when you pray.
 Check when done.
- 2. If you do not already know it, memorize the model prayer above.** (Commonly known as the "Lord's Prayer.")
 Check when done.