

DOCTRINE OF PRAYER

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1. DEFINITION:

- A. Prayer is any communication or communion with God.
- B. All prayer is an expression of thought; therefore, the mentality of the soul and human volition (will) are both involved.
- C. Prayer is motivated by the Word of God in the soul and the ministry of the Holy spirit in the life.
- D. Prayers can be offered to God in many categories:
 - (1) Confession - 1 John 1:9
 - (2) Thanksgiving - Col. 3:15,16,17
 - (3) Praise - Rom. 15:11; Rev. 19:5
 - (4) Intercession - 1 Tim. 2:1
 - (5) Petition - Phil 4:6; 1 Jn. 5:15
 - (6) Supplication - Phil. 4:6

2 VOCABULARY:

A. Greek New Testament:

- (1) εὐχή - euche - (Gk. noun) - prayer (James 5:15; a vow (Acts 18:18; 21:23)
- (2) εὐχομαι - euchomai - (Gk. verb) - to pray (2 Cor. 13:7; James 5:16a)
- (3) προσευχή - proseuche - (Gk. n.) - prayer:
 - (a) a prayer to God - Phil 4:6; Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:1; 5:5
 - (b) a place of prayer - Acts 16:13,16
 - (c) “prayer in general” - Rom. 12:12
- (4) προσεύχομαι - proseuchomai - (Gk. vb.) - always used to pray to God (Rom. 8:26; Eph. 6:18, used with the whole armor of God)
- (5) ἐρωτώ - erotao - (Gk. vb.) - to ask as a request (Lk. 14:18,19; 16:27; Jn. 4:31; 14:16; 1 Jn. 5:16)
- (6) δέησις - deesis - (Gk. n.) - primarily a wanting, a request, a need, an entreaty, a supplication (Rom. 10:1; 2 Cor. 1:11; 9:14; James 5:16b, prayer of a righteous man)
- (7) δέομαι - deomai - (Gk. vb.) - to desire, to beseech, to beg others (Acts 10:2; 2 Cor. 5:20; 8:4)
- (8) παρακαλέω - parakaleo - (Gk. vb.) - to call to one’s side, that is, to pray (Matt. 26:53, Jesus could call upon the Father)
- (9) ἔντευξις - enteuxis - (Gk. n.) - prayer of intercession (1 Tim. 2:1; 4:5)
- (10) αἷτημα - aitema - (Gk. n.) - a prayer of petition (1 John 5:15)
- (11) ἰκτερία - hikteria - (Gk. n.) - a prayer of supplication (Heb. 5:7)
- (12) εὐχαριστία - eucharistia - (Gk. n.) - the rendering of thanks, thanksgiving (Col 2:7)
- (13) εὐχαριστέω - eucharisteo - (Gk. vb.) - to give thanks (Col. 1:3)

- (14) ὁμολογέω - homologeo - (Gk. vb.) - to acknowledge, to admit, to confess (1 John 1:9)
- (15) ἄνέω - aineo - (Gk. vb.) - to praise, (used only once in the New Testament, a voice from heaven) (Rev. 19:5)

B. Hebrew Old Testament:

- (1) פָּלַל - PALAL - (Heb. verb, hiphil stem) - to supplicate, to intercede, to pray (Psa. 5:2; Job 42:8)
- (2) צָלַא - TZeLA' - (Aramaic. vb., pael stem) - to pray (Dan. 6:10; Ezra 6:10)
- (3) עָתַר - 'ATAR - (Heb. vb.) - to pray, as to burn incense (Gen. 25:21)
- (4) חָנַן - CHANAN - (Heb. vb.) - to pray, to make supplication (2 Chron. 6:37)
- (5) בָּעוּ - BA'U - (Aramaic. vb.) - prayer, petition (Dan. 6:7, 13)
- (6) שׁוּעַ - SHUA' - (Heb. noun.) - prayer, petition, a cry for help (Job 30:24)
- (7) מִשְׁאַלָּה - MISHe'ALAH - (Heb. noun.) - prayer, petition, desire (Psa. 20:5)
- (8) שָׂאֵל - SHA'AL - (Heb. vb.) - to pray, to request (Psa. 122:6a)
- (9) תְּחִינָה - TeCHINAH - (Heb. noun.) - grace, mercy (Josh. 11:20; Ezra 9:8); prayer, supplication, a cry for mercy (Psa. 6:9; 55:1; 119:170)
- (10) תְּפִלָּה - TePHILLAH - (Heb. noun.) - intercession for anyone (Isa. 37:4; Jer. 7:16; 11:14) entreaty, supplication, prayer (Psa. 4:1; Prov. 15:8)

3. PRAYER TO GOD THE FATHER (the direction of prayer):

- A. **Prayer from the Son**, the Lord Jesus Christ - (John 17:1-26, the Lord's prayer; Matt. 26:53; Heb. 7:25)
- B. **Prayer from the Holy Spirit** - (Rom. 8:26, 27)
- C. **Prayer from believers** of all times - (Matt. 6:9-13; James 5:16, 17; Heb. 4:16; Psa. 4:3; 32:6)
- NOTE:** Unbelievers **cannot pray legitimately**; but must first believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 16:31; John 1:12; Gal. 3:26). A relationship must exist before bona fide prayer becomes possible. (John 9:31; Rom. 10:13, 14)
- D. **Prayer from angels** - (Luke 2:13, 14; John 9:31; Rev. 4:8, 9; likely Rev. 19:5)

4. THE APPROACH TO GOD: (the finite must recognize the greatness of the infinite)

- A. The address of prayer is **to the Father**. (Matt 6:6, 9; Luke 11:2; Eph. 3:14; Eph. 5:20; 1 Pet. 1:17)
- B. The channel of the approach and the authority for prayer is **in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ**. (John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24; Eph. 5:20)
- C. The transmission of the approach is through the **power of the Holy Spirit**. (Eph. 6:18; Rom. 8:26, 27)

5. THE AGENDA FOR PRAYER:

- A. **Confession** - (1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 11:31; Psa. 32:5; 51:2-4, 7-10)
- B. **Thanksgiving**, praise, adoration - (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:16, 17; 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:18; Psa. 107:1; 136:1-3, 26; 138:1,2)
- C. **Intercession** - (Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:3)
- D. **Petition**, supplication - (Phil. 4:6; Heb. 4:16; Psa. 5:2)

6. THE FACETS OF PRAYER: “**Ask**, and it shall be given to you; **seek**, and you shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened to you.” (Matt. 7:7; Luke 11:9-13)

- A. “**Asking**” is normal prayer.
- B. “**Seeking**” is prayer anticipating divine guidance.
- C. “**Knocking**” is intense prayer, or supplication.

7. INTERCESSORY PRAYER:

- A. Elijah provides an example of the **power of intercessory prayer**. (1 Kings 18:42-46; James 5:16-18)
- B. **Prevailing prayer** is a system under which an impending crisis is prayed for continually. (Acts 12:5, 12; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17)
- C. Prayer should be offered **for the unbelievers** to understand the issue of the gospel clearly so that they might believe and be saved. (Rom. 10:1-4; Psa. 122:6, “*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*”)
- D. Prayer should be offered **for unknown believers**. (Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:3-11)
- E. Prayer should be offered **for known believers**. (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-19; Eph. 6:19, 20; Col. 4:3)
- F. A **pattern for personal prayer** is found in the “Apostles Prayer”. (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4), sometimes called “The Lord’s Prayer.”
- G. The great **intercessory prayer** of the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 17:1-26)

8. PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER:

- A. Prayer effectiveness depends on **consistent intake** of the **Word of God**. (Jn. 15:7)
- B. Prayer is **part of God’s will** for believers. (Jer. 33:3; 1 Thess. 5:17, 18)
- C. All prayer was **taken into account** by God **in the divine decrees**. (Isa. 65:24)
- D. Prayer demands an **understanding of and orientation to the will of God**. (1 John 5:14)
- E. Prayer must be offered in the **filling of the Holy Spirit**. (Eph. 6:18; cf. Eph. 5:18)
- F. Prayer must be offered in accordance with the **principle of grace**, the plan of God. (Heb. 4:16)
- G. Prayer is **an extension of faith** toward God. Believers are to **pray in faith**, believing, without any doubting. (Matt. 21:21, 22; Mark 11:24; James 1:5-7)

- H. Prayer is **ineffective** when the believer is carnal. (Psa. 66:18; Prov. 1:28; Prov. 28:9; Mark 11:25; James 4:3; 1 Peter 3:7)
- I. There are some things that we are **not to pray for**, 1 Jn. 5:16, as praying against the known will of God. (Exodus 32:32-34)
- J. Believers are to **pray about everything**. (Phil 4:6)
- K. Believers are to **pray for wisdom**. (James 1:5)
- L. Believers are **commanded to pray without ceasing**, continually and fervently. (Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 5:17)
- M. Believers are **always to include thanksgiving** in their prayers. (1 Thess. 5:17, 18; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; Col. 3:15-17; 4:2)
- N. Believers often **do not have because they do not ask**. (James 4:2)
- O. Prayer is always a **recognition of the source** of our logistical grace. (2 Cor. 9:8; with Matt. 6:25-34; Eph. 3:20; Phil. 4:19)
- P. Believers who are **obedient** to God's commandments and do the things that are **pleasing** in His sight **receive whatever they ask** in prayer. (John 15:7; 1 John 3:22)
- Q. The believer who has demonstrated God's righteousness has **great effectiveness in prayer**. (James 5:16b; Prov. 15:8, 29)
- R. Prayer is related to the believer's **love for God**. (Psa. 116:1, 2)

9. REASONS WHY PRAYERS ARE NOT ANSWERED:

- A. **Carnality** - the status of a believer who sins and loses the filling of the Holy Spirit, also called "grieving the Holy Spirit." (1 Cor. 3:1, 3; Eph. 5:18; Eph. 6:18; 4:30; John 9:31; 1 John 1:8, 10)
 - (1) Lust pattern **selfishness** gives **wrong motivation** in prayer. (James 4:2-4; 1 John 2:16)
 - (2) **Arrogant pride** is the first mental attitude sin which results in self-righteousness and no answer from God. (Job 35:12, 13; James 1:14, 15)
 - (3) Any mental attitude sin or other **personal sin which produces carnality** renders any prayer, other than a prayer of confession, useless. (Psa. 66:18)
 - (4) Any **prayer not asked in faith** and asked **with doubting** will result in no answer from God. (James 1:6-8)
 - (5) **Lack of compassion**, a sin of omission, neutralizes prayer. (Prov. 21:13; James 4:17; cf. Jonah)
 - (6) **Failure to forgive** others neutralizes prayer. (Matt. 6:14, 15; Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13)
 - (7) **Malfunction in marriage** hinders prayer. (1 Pet. 3:7)
- B. **Extended or perpetual carnality** - is the state of a believer who has sinned and has not confessed his or her sin for an extended period of time. This status is called "backsliding," "fallen from grace," "quenching the Spirit", reversionism, or even apostasy (Jer. 8:5; Prov. 14:14; Gal. 5:4; Heb. 12:15; 1 Thess. 5:19)

- (1) This carnal believer is in a constant state of maladjustment to the justice of God, **habitually failing to confess** his sins. (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:1, 2; Eph. 4:17, 18; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 1 John 1:9, 10)
 - (2) Constant **rejection of God's word**, Bible doctrine, makes prayer a sin and an abomination. (Psa. 109:7; Prov. 28:9; 1 John 1:9, 10)
 - (3) **Outright rebellion against God** eliminates the possibility of any prayer being heard by Him. (Deut. 1:42-45; Isa. 1:2-5, 15; cf. 1 John 3:22; John 9:31; 1 Sam. 16:14, 23; 18:10, 12; 1 Sam. 28:6, 15-19; 31:1-13, the example of King Saul; Rom. 10:13, 14)
- C. **The state of an unbeliever** – The unbeliever does not have a saving relationship with God;
- (1) Therefore, the **unbeliever has no access to God** in prayer. (Job 27:8-10; Job 35:9-13; Psa. 18:40, 41; Prov. 1:22, 24-32; John 9:31)
 - (2) **Only those who believe** in God, and today, believe in Jesus Christ, can have access to God in prayer. (Acts 16:31; John 3:15-18; 6:28, 29; 14:1)
- Note:** There is **no sinner's prayer** for unbelievers!

10. THE PRINCIPLE OF GRACE IN PRAYER:

- A. Prayer is a **privilege of the royal family** and an extension of **grace function**; hence, it is impossible to approach God in prayer on the basis of human merit. (Heb. 4:16)
- B. The believer priest approaches God in prayer **on the basis of our high priest**, Jesus Christ, and His merit only. (Titus 3:5; Heb. 4:14-16; 8:1-3; 9:12, 15)
- C. Prayers must be **offered in humility** because God is no respecter of persons in the case of believers offering prayers, but is only propitiated, satisfied, with the work of His Son. (2 Chron. 7:14; Acts 10:34 cf. Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:24)
- D. God hears our prayers because **we are believers** in Jesus Christ, because **we believe and apply His word**, and because **we have the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit**. (John 9:31; 14:12-17; 1 John 5:14, 15)
- E. In other words, God hears and answers prayers on the basis of **who and what Christ is** and whether or not we are **in Christ** and **in fellowship**.

11. THE CATEGORIES OF PETITION IN PRAYER:

- NOTE:** **Petition** in prayer is what we ask for, while **desire** is what we really need.
- A. **Positive-negative:** Petition answered; desire not answered. (1 Sam. 8:5-9, 1 Sam. 5:19, 20)
 - B. **Negative-positive:** Petition not answered; desire answered. (Gen. 17:18; Gen. 18:23-33; 2 Cor. 12:7-10 - Paul's thorn in the flesh)
 - C. **Positive-positive:** Petition answered; desire answered. (Judges 16:28; 1 Kings 18:36, 37; Luke 23:42, 43; John 11:41, 42)
 - D. **Negative-negative:** Neither petition or desire answered. (James 4:2-3; cf. point #8)