

Prayer

“Prayer is not only a means to an end, it is also an end in and of itself”

~David Bradshaw

Why do we pray? How do we pray? What happens when we pray? I’m glad you asked! Prayer is an essential part of the Christian life! Let’s dive into some prayer basics!

3 Reasons We Pray

1) Prayer is Spending Time with our best friend:

Just like we talk to a friend to get to know them better, when we talk to God, we find that our intimacy with Him grows. Just as friends talk with one another and share their hopes, joys, sorrows etc., when we pray, we share the deep parts of who we are with God. In turn, we are opened up to God’s sharing of Himself as well. God transforms, renews, and refreshes us through prayer. Prayer also reminds us of our need to depend on God and not on ourselves. We were made for connection and prayer is a big part of having that sweet connection with God.

2) Prayer Allows us to Participate in God's Kingdom:

Does God need our help? No. He is all powerful and in control of everything in His creation. However, God has *chosen* to run His kingdom in intimacy with humans. He wants us to participate in bringing heaven to earth! He wants us to pray for breakthrough and to rejoice in seeing our prayers become reality. Our prayers have an impact on how God’s kingdom comes on this earth!

3) Prayer Gives us Power Over Evil and accomplishes things in the spiritual realm:

“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). In prayer, even the physically weak can become strong and do battle in the spiritual realm. As children of God, we have the authority of the Father to bind up and rebuke that which is dark. Often, there are spiritual undercurrents to our struggles and covering them in prayer invites the Holy Spirit to bring healing, clarity, deliverance, and freedom to avenues where typical “problem solving” could never be enough.

Let's move from theory to action! Here are three good prayer exercises!

1) Read Matthew chapter 6:9-13 known as "The Lord's Prayer"

It has been said that each verse of that prayer could be a chapter on how to pray! What do you see? How does Jesus pray? What sorts of things does He praise, request, declare, and make supplication for?

A. Apply: After spending some time studying Jesus' example of prayer, write your own personalized version of the Lord's prayer.

2) Try the ACTS prayer plan to begin your mornings for the next 3 days:

A is for ADORATION- this is praising God for who He is! It is taking the time to affirm his character & nature (patient, kind, compassionate, just, all powerful, all knowing, all good etc.)

C is for CONFESSION- this is talking to God about that things that you've thought, said, and done that are not in line with him and his desires for you. Pray for specific instances and patterns that you want to repent of and ask God to remove anything that hinders you from seeing him clearly and embracing all that he has for you.

T is for THANKSGIVING- this is remembering ways in which God has provided for you and thanking God for things he has done! This can include material needs he has met, people in your life that support you, prayers that he has answered etc. e

S is for SUPPLICATION-this is asking for God to move in specific ways for things that are going on in the world, our nation, the lives of your friends and family, as well as your own personal needs and requests.

3) Try spending one of those three mornings in prayer on your knees. We see men and women of God in the Bible and today in all kinds of physical postures when they pray: sitting, kneeling, laying prostrate, standing, walking. One of the most common physical postures of prayer seen in the Bible, and throughout the world, is prayer on the knees. Our physical posture often helps us stay focused, alert, and aids with the attitude of our heart, humble, dependent, when we come before God.