

“The Spiritual Discipline of Prayer  
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A Poem About Prayer, author unknown.

He prayed for strength that he might achieve;  
He was made weak that he might obey.  
He prayed for health that he might do greater things;  
He was given infirmity that he might do better things.  
He prayed for riches that he might be happy;  
He was given poverty that he might be wise.  
He prayed for power that he might have the praise of men;  
He was given weakness that he might feel the need of God.  
He prayed for all things that he might enjoy life;  
He was given life that he might enjoy all things.  
He received nothing that he asked for—but all that he hoped for.

Many prayers are answered in ways that cannot be seen. “Several years ago, at a council meeting at another church, a pastor came to the meeting ready to chew out a staff member in front of the entire council. The pastor wanted to discredit and embarrass the staff member in a demeaning way. This particular pastor was absolutely wrong in her opinion but saw herself as completely right and everyone else on the council as completely in the wrong, including the paid staff. She came to the meeting to do war. What the pastor did not know was just a few miles away, was a prayer warrior who had the inner prompting to pray for God to protect the entire council meeting from the damage the pastor was trying to inflict. The chair next to the pastor was filled with a woman who wore the most fragrant perfume. The pastor opened her mouth to speak, and something strange happened. Her breathing became labored, and she started to cough and could not stop coughing. She left the room to get water and when she sat down again, the coughing persisted. To make a long story longer, she never uttered a word the entire evening. That wonderful perfume gave her an allergic reaction that made her speechless and never again did she have opportunity to speak her poison in a public forum. To this day, she does not know that a prayer warrior was praying for her not to speak.”

One of the most private, personal, and sensitive disciplines we do as Christians is pray. Praying is an intimate spiritual discipline whereby you lay your life bare in front of the Lord God. You bare your soul to God. In prayer the distance between God and you is removed and you stand, sit, or kneel in the Lord's Presence. “Father, in the name of Jesus we come into your Throne Room to find your grace and mercy in time of need.” The question has been asked, “What is the proper way to begin praying.” I have two answers for that. My first answer is found in Hebrews 4:16, “Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Think back with me, will you, to the book of Exodus. A huge cloud settled upon Mt. Sinai. And on that mountain there was thunder, lightning, and smoke and the earth quaked. Out of that cloud came a voice and Moses went in and God spoke to Moses. Friends, that cloud is called the glory cloud. God hides himself in that cloud. But if you were invited inside the cloud you would see the very Throne Room of God. The only description Moses gives us is what was under God's feet. I quote Exodus 24:10, “There they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there seemed to be a pavement of brilliant sapphire, as clear as the heavens.” It is my opinion Moses only wrote what he saw beneath God's feet because when he went into the cloud he humbled himself before the Lord God Almighty by getting on his knees or even prostrating himself before the Lord God. In the Presence of the Holy he was so greatly humbled by God's greatness compared to his own humanness and unworthiness. Isaiah chapter 6 gives us a much clearer vision of the Throne Room of God with the angels all around and so forth. Isaiah is so overwhelmed with God's utter holiness. Now this is my point, because of Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection, we now have access as God's chosen people to the Throne Room of God. We enter what Moses saw. We enter what Isaiah describes in Isaiah chapter 6. We enter into the room where God resides and makes all of the decisions that runs the universe, the very Throne Room of God where

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has been in perfect relationship for all eternity. You can't get any closer to God than entering His Throne room.

When I am at some prayer meetings, on the inside I sense how small I am compared to how vast God is. In some prayer meetings I am overwhelmed with how weak I am and how strong God is. I find that there is only one thing that I can do at that moment and that is to get on my knees. I feel moved to get on my knees because I am in the Presence of someone greater. I so wish this church had kneelers. Being on our knees is a sign of surrender and to surrender to God is the essence of prayer. In prayer we surrender everything to God for God to carry out His will. We surrender our wills to God. Not my will but thy will be done.

“Father, in the name of Jesus I come into your throne of grace.” This is a wonderful way to begin a prayer and there are other ways to begin praying. The book of Psalms gives us several ways. Jesus tells us to begin praying, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Jesus came from heaven and had spent every moment in the Throne Room. It was where he came from. This was Jesus' description of the Throne Room, where the Father reigned in all his holiness. This leads me to a very important part about beginning your prayers. Every time you pray you are in the Presence of the Holy. Every time you pray, you are speaking to God who is by far more powerful than anything and everything you are facing. God is much larger than your biggest need or problem. Sometimes every need you have or feel melts in the Presence of His Holiness, His Holy grandeur, in his Majestic Presence. His strength, his mercy, and grace are sufficient for all that you need. It is in the Throne Room of God that His Presence soothes your soul, and you find in God what you truly need.

Something we may struggle with in prayer is the feeling that our needs are more than God can handle. Others struggle in prayer feeling, my needs are too small to mention to God. There is no need too great for God nor is there any need too small to mention. God invites you into the Throne Room and invites you to come in with confidence, with boldness.

It is so good to begin prayer acknowledging God’s greatness, vastness, majesty, power, kindness, goodness and so forth. We don’t do this to remind God of who He is. He already knows who he is. We do this so we acknowledge His greatness, so we know deep in our souls that we are in the Presence of Almighty God. And when you are in His Presence, it is almost impossible to be quiet about the one you are praying too. Our souls, our very being is moved to praise in His glorious Presence.

The second place to pray and the second part of prayer that I will mention here is to go and pray at the foot of the cross. You begin your prayer like this, “Father, I come to the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ.” This is where we go to ask Jesus to forgive us our sins. Thirty-five years ago, in my imagination I would picture myself at the foot of the cross with Jesus on the cross. I know longer use my imagination. I just know that I am there. I don’t see anything, but I do know that when Jesus died, he died for all of my sins, and it is there that I tell Jesus what my sins are as I confess them to Him by name and ask for His forgiveness. It is at the cross that I sense my sins being given over to Jesus and His righteousness being given back in return. It is also here at the cross that it is good to picture those next to you, the people that you are holding grudges against. Those you cannot forgive in your heart, picture them with you at the foot of the cross. At the cross, Jesus forgives you your thousands of sins. Who are you not to forgive those few sins that have been committed against you. At the cross, God’s grace is available for you to let go of all those long-held grudges, bitterness’s, resentments, and deep hostilities. All forgiveness takes place at the cross for it was Jesus’ work on the cross that made true forgiveness possible.

Before I conclude this sermon I want to say something about praying in God’s Throne Room. The Bible describes the Throne Room. When you pray in the Throne Room do you see what Moses or Isaiah saw? No, you don’t. But God invites us in to experience what the eyes cannot see. Somehow you are present there, in front of God. I cannot explain how you are

present, but I know you are. Some will have a great sense of God’s vastness, holiness, and power. Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty your soul sings out.

**1. In prayer we “praise” God.** **2. In prayer we “repent” of our sins to God.** **3. In prayer it is good to “ask” God for anything and everything that is on your heart.** The Bible says, “You have not because you ask not.” It is okay to pray for yourself. And it is okay to ask God for things. I think in heaven it will be revealed to us the great things of God that we could have experienced on this earth but did not because we failed to ask. On the other hand, the Bible also tells us why God says no to some of our prayers, “3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

It is okay to go to the Lord and ask. God will answer as God sees fit. If we have the wrong motive it is good to pray for God to correct our motives and make them holy.

Praise, Repent, Ask, and Yield. So many of us carry very heavy loads. We have so much baggage that we carry everywhere we go. I have spent a lot of time at airports, and I am amazed at how much luggage some people have. It’s like they brought everything with them including the kitchen sink. Some of you carry very heavy loads. God invites you in prayer to yield all of your baggage, your luggage, your heavy burdens to him in prayer. **4. In prayer, you “yield” over to God everything that is weighing you down.** “You cast all your cares upon Him for He careth for you.”

Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield, and in prayer enjoy the Lord. Not all the time, but sometimes in prayer you will not utter a word. You will be in the Throne of Grace simply to enjoy being in the Presence of God. Yes, prayer is work, hard work, but there is also enjoyment in prayer, being with the one who loves you the most and has done the most for you. **5. There can be great “enjoyment” in prayer.**

And finally, **6. in prayer you will find “rest” for your soul.** You may conclude your prayer simply by resting in God’s Presence, enjoying God’s peace that is found in the Throne of

Grace. And when you are resting, God may convey his wisdom to you that you will only hear when you are silent before Him. God is not fretting, worrying, or having anxiety attacks.

Nothing surprises God. God is at peace and His peace is yours as you abide in His Presence.

He is still sovereign. Everything that is taking place in your life is for your good and for God’s greater glory. How good it is to go to the Throne Room of God, the Throne of grace to find grace and mercy for this is what you truly need.

P praise, R repent, A ask, Y yield, E enjoy, R rest. This is the spiritual discipline of prayer.