

Essential Keys To Prayer

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

Essential Keys to Prayer

Published by Hungry Hearts Ministries
PO Box 10334 Jackson TN 38308
hungryheartsmn@aol.com

No part of this work may be reproduced or republished without express written consent of Hungry Hearts Ministries. It may be freely shared electronically in its original form without editing. All rights reserved.

1st ed—April 2016; 2nd ed-Nov 2017. Special thanks to Jill and Steve Pettis and Wendy Pierce for proofreading

All Bible references come from the Kingdom Life Version. King James Version is sometimes used, but noted when it is used. Both are Public Domain. All language references, unless otherwise noted, come from Strong's Concordance. Strong, James.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
What Is Prayer?	6
Why Pray?	9
How Do We Pray?	12
Our Approach to Prayer	16
Praying in the Spirit.....	19
Hearing the Voice of God.....	21
Who Should We Pray For?.....	24
Pray With Purpose.....	27
Sample Prayers.....	30

Introduction

Everyday we communicate our thoughts and feelings to other people. The chief way we do this is through talking. This happens at home, work, and even church. When we talk, we are expressing our thoughts on how to do something or just how we feel.

Prayer works very similarly. It is simply talking to God. It is when we express how we feel to Him. You can make requests to Him. In this booklet, you will learn the basics of prayer. You will learn what prayer is, why you pray, and how you pray.

Chapter 1

What is Prayer?

A wise man once said that prayer is “the heart and spirit of a man reaching out to God”. It could not be stated any better. Prayer is simply how we communicate with God. It is talking to God. How is this?

When you received the Holy Spirit, you became a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The Holy Spirit is Christ dwelling in you. This gives you constant fellowship with Christ and God. We are now one of God’s children. We have an open line of communication between us and Him. There is a difference between communication with people and communication with God.

When it comes to our communication with people, consider that you are closer to some people than others. We have some friends we talk to occasionally. We have other friends we talk to on a more frequent basis such as every week. In addition, we have family members. If you are married, you have a lifetime friend that you talk to every day.

Communication with God is much more personal and intimate because He lives inside of you by His Spirit. This just reinforces how personal God is and how much He desires to communicate with you. We can talk to God in our heart, thoughts, with spoken words, or even just being silent before Him. Even when we are silent, we are communicating how we feel; we are pouring out our feelings to Him through the Spirit of God within us.

God even hears your thoughts: “Now to **him who is able to do** exceedingly abundantly above all **that we ask or think**, according to the power that works in us...” (Ephesians 3:20)

There are times we groan under feelings of duress, frustration, or pain. We do not even know what to say—we may not even have the words to say because we are in anguish. This is another form of prayer. “In the same way, the Spirit also helps our weaknesses,

for we do not know how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings **which cannot be uttered**” (Romans 8:26).

Sometimes prayer is just a simple petition requesting that God to intervene in a situation. “I thank my God whenever I remember you, always in every request of mine on behalf of you all, making my requests with joy” (Phil 1:3-4).

We can also pray with thanksgiving. “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil 4:6).

The first recorded use of language in the Bible was between God and man. We learn about this in the very first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis. Genesis records the beginning of the world and mankind.

Genesis 2:15-18

15 The LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it. 16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; 17 but you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die.” 18 The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

God gave Adam instructions so that all mankind could have a prosperous and healthy life. God even spoke when it was time to create a wife for man. In the beginning, man and woman had a simple rule to live by: do not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent, known as satan, came into the garden and deceived them into eating it. He also used language!

Genesis 3:4-11

4 The serpent said to the woman, “You will not die, 5 for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 When the

woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took some of its fruit, and ate. Then she gave some to her husband with her, and he ate it, too. 7 Their eyes were opened, and they both knew that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together, and made coverings for themselves. 8 They heard the LORD God's voice walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 The LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 The man said, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; so I hid myself." 11 God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

God told man and woman not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they ate from it anyways. This was a sin. After this happened, God came down into the garden to fellowship with Adam and Eve, but they hid. They hid from God's presence because of their sin.

Notice that He still came down to fellowship with them. He still spoke to them. He did not thunder down with judgment on them. He came down to speak to them one-on-one about what happened.

Right after this, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden. They were not banished from His presence or His voice. Prayer is the opportunity for your Heavenly Father to hear your voice, your struggles, and your inner most thoughts. It is communing with Him.

Chapter 2

Why Pray?

Some people might ask – Why should we pray at all? Prayer is the opportunity for your Heavenly Father to hear your voice, your struggles, and your inner most thoughts. It is how we experience the Lord God’s voice as man and woman did in the Garden. What makes prayer more intimate for us is that God’s Spirit abides within us. This means prayer is communication in our on-going relationship with God.

Many times we are not completely honest with others about our feelings. It is an act of humility for us to confess to God how we really feel. Jesus said “I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). When we pray, we recognize that God is our source. His Son strengthens us through the Spirit.

We are limited beings. We cannot control everything in our lives. In fact, we control very little. Every day, other people make decisions we cannot control. Your employer may cut back jobs, and your position is terminated. Someone may insult you. A friend or loved one may die. A natural disaster could occur. These are all situations humans cannot control. These are all reasons why we need prayer.

As humans, we are limited in what we can do. Through prayer, we can learn to process these events and persevere through them. Psalm 24:1 tells us, “1 The earth is The LORD’s, with its fullness; the world, and those who dwell in it.” Everything belongs to God. Our Savior, Jesus, told us, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). We cannot control certain situations, but God can. While we cannot control situations, we can control our response (prayer). God is able to stop things from happening. Prayer is asking God, who can do anything, to intervene on our behalf. It is acknowledging His divine authority.

Sometimes you are going through a situation that you do not understand. You need wisdom to navigate. You may have experienced the death of a loved one; perhaps you have been mistreated. Sometimes you are financially struggling and need help. You may have car trouble or need a job. You need wisdom, but you also need provision. Sometimes you are hurting, and you need inner peace and healing. Sometimes you are lonely and need comfort.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-11, “7 “Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. 8 For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or who is there among you, who, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, who will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”

We can receive help from God, but we have to ask. This requires humility on our part because we have to admit that we need help. We have to admit that we are incomplete and lacking without God. We have to realize that we cannot do it on our own. This is hard for humans to do, but why not do it? You need the help; God can help you. Here are some more verses to guide you:

“But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’ (James 4:6).

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you” (James 4:10).

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (I Peter 5:6).

If we will humble ourselves and ask, then God will grant us favor. This type of humility allows the Kingdom of God to grow inside of us. It allows our hearts and minds to become soft to God’s request. The prophet Isaiah told us, “But now, The LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay and you our potter. We all are the

work of your hand” (Isaiah 64:8). To God, we are all like clay. Humility shown by prayer allows God’s perfect will to mold us. The humility of asking keeps us from trusting in our human abilities.

Remember, we humans we mess a lot of things up. Prayer builds our faith in Him to ask. Look at all the wars and problems in our world today.

If we humble ourselves, then God will lift us up; He will also lift up our request and grant it. It will refocus our attention and attitudes. We will see God as our provider and sustainer. Our worries will greatly diminish. This leads us into the next question: How do we pray?

Chapter 3

How Do We Pray?

Too many times when we hear the word “prayer”, we think too much about how it should look. Typically, we think that our eyes should be closed, hands clasped together, on our knees, or sitting in a chair. Truly, prayer can be done anywhere at any time. We can petition God standing up, sitting down, on our knees, on our face, and even with our eyes open.

There are times we need God to act immediately. You may be at work and an instant crisis occurs. There are times we need God to act when we are driving. At times, a friend, family member, or someone else may need you to pray right on the spot. Of course, we want to set aside SPECIFIC time to pray to God as well. I will discuss this at the end of this chapter.

When you pray, just talk. Make the request known to God. As aforementioned, you can speak to God through thoughts, words, or even just groaning. Just let it out. In one way, it is like talking to your best friend or earthly father. Your earthly father may have never been there for you. Your Heavenly Father is always there.

Is there a right or wrong way to pray?

Consider when you were just a child. Your first communication was not very developed. In fact, most humans first utter sounds like “goo goo” and “ga ga”. Our first words are typically “moma” or “daddy”. They are simple, but they get the point across. As we mature physically, our communication improves. We are better able to express ourselves in a way that others can understand.

The key to developing a prayer life is to simply pray. Start somewhere. As you pray, you will mature in your prayer walk. Our communication with God begins with talk, but as we mature we learn the different times and manners to approach God.

We are so blessed because our Savior Jesus gave us a great out-

line to guide us in prayer. It is commonly known as “The Lord’s Prayer”. It is found in Matthew 6:5-13. “5 When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 In praying, don’t use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. 8 Therefore don’t be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him. 9 Pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. 10 Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. 13 Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.’

First, we learn to never pray as a show to other people. Always pray sincerely to God because you believe in Him. Showing off poorly represents God (and you too). When we pray, we do not need to imitate the pagans. Some pagan religions believe that by saying a certain word or phrase so many times their wishes will be automatically granted. This is known as sorcery and it is against the will of God.. We pray to God out of our love for Him and relationship with Him. As you read this book, you will find there is much more to prayer than just reciting words.

In verses 9-12, Jesus gives us the model prayer, which is often called “The Lord’s Prayer”. It is a tremendous guideline for us. We learn to address God as our the Father. He is the head of all things.

As Paul said in Ephesians 4:4-6, “There is one body and one Spirit, even as you also were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all, and in us all.” We pray to the Father in the name of His son, Jesus. Why? Jesus is the firstborn Son of

God. He is the Father's representative to the earth. Jesus is the Holy Spirit within us (2 Cor. 3:15-18). He sits at the right hand of God and appeals to the Father on our behalf.

Jesus said, "16 You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you will ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you" (John 15:16). Earlier, He said, "I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you" (John 14:18).

The Apostle John said, "My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." (1 John 2:1) The writer of Hebrews said, "Therefore he is also able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, seeing that he lives forever to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

We make our appeal to the Father through the Son because the Son died to SAVE us. Jesus owns us because He paid for us through His death. By receiving Jesus, we become part of the God Family. "For through him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18).

The second step in prayer is to ask for God's will to be done on earth. This means you pray to learn what God purpose for your life. It is easy to go to God in prayer and have a list of things we want, such as saying, "Lord, I need this iPhone 7. I also need a new car. I also need a house." Are we being selfish? The Apostle James has more to say on this: "You lust, and don't have. You murder and covet, and can't obtain. You fight and make war. You don't have, because you don't ask. You ask, and don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." (James 4:2-3)

If we pray with selfishness, then we will not receive from God. Jesus willingly laid down His life for you and I. He gave up everything. He is asking us to lay down our selfish desires to honor His sacrifice. Before you ask God for something, consider how

you are caring for what you have. How will you honor the Kingdom of God with your request? God is a great giver and a provider, but He is also infinitely responsible.

Next, we ask for daily bread. This means praying for God's provision (such as food, shelter, and basic needs). This leads us to greater understanding. Food in the Bible can be compared to revelation knowledge or understanding from God (Matt 4:4, 1 Cor. 3:2). We need daily understanding from God. There are things in the Bible that we do not understand. There are situations we face daily that we do not understand. Because Jesus has died for us, we want to live for Him. We want to please Him. Just as our natural body needs food, our spiritual new man needs divine guidance. We need spiritual food. Ask God for divine understanding.

In the next part of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus transitions to forgiveness. Jesus tells us in Mark 11:25-26 that we cannot be forgiven if we do not forgive others. When you pray, you must always forgive others. Remember how Christ has forgiven you. You start by letting go of the offense you have towards others in your heart. If you have hatred, you release it. Ask God to wipe the hurt out of your mind and heart. Ask God to forgive them; ask God to fill your heart with love for them. Ask God to bless them.

Lastly, Jesus tells us to pray for protection from the enemy. We have an enemy, Satan, who wishes to destroy us. God gives us strength to help us withstand his attacks. We cannot do it on our own; we need God's help. To learn more about this subject, read the booklet "Spiritual Warfare." It can be downloaded for free.

Another powerful tool is fixed prayers. They are powerful, especially when we cannot fathom the words to pray. The Psalms are an example of this. It's the Word of God. Take a Psalm, such as Psalm 91, and put your name in that Psalm to make it personal. Pray it over yourself. Pray it over others. When a church prays a fixed prayer together, it is powerful because it is the only time when everyone is praying the same way!

Chapter 4

Our Approach to Prayer

Another important aspect to prayer is how we approach God. To quote a verse from an earlier chapter, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (I Peter 5:6).

Humility is the first key in prayer. If we cannot humble ourselves before God’s authority and ability to act and intervene, then we cannot receive anything from Him. Genuine prayer is an admission that our human effort will fall short.

The second key is reverence. While God is our Father and best friend, He is also a Great King. While you can boldly approach God whenever you need Him (Hebrews 4:16), make sure to show Him proper respect. If we show honor and respect to earthly leaders, such as the President or a local official, how much more the greatest Ruler of all? He is the King of Kings.

Another key to approaching God in prayer is faith. What is faith? Faith is a word that simply means confidence, trust, or persuasion. If you know you have \$100 in the bank, then you can write a check for \$20. You have confidence. If we really believe that God can change our situation, then we must ask with confidence that He can do so. He must hold to that confidence.

“God, having in the past spoken to the fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways” (Hebrews 11:1). “For we have become partakers of Christ, if we **hold** the beginning of our confidence firm to the end” (Hebrews 3:14).

Let’s use an example. Sometimes you may pray and request God to act, but you do not see the results in the time frame you expected. This does not mean God has not answered your prayer. You must remain confident in your heart and mind that God will do it. Hold on to your confidence. The enemy and other people will try to convince you to give up; you just have to keep fighting

to hold it. While you may not see the prayer answered in the time-frame you desire, trust that He will provide.

James wrote, “5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, without any doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. 7 For that man shouldn’t think that he will receive anything from the Lord. 8 He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:5-8).

If you ask God for something in prayer and doubt that it will happen, then you become double-minded. Saying things like “God can’t do that” is limiting Him and showing a lack of confidence in His power. You are saying that you did not believe in Him the first time you prayed.

How do you keep the faith? First of all, continue to pray out loud with confidence. Ask God for strength. The Apostle Paul wrote, “But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, ‘I believed, and therefore I spoke.’ We also believe, and therefore we also speak” (2 Cor. 4:13). “Always rejoice. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). In this verse, Paul encourages us to pray continually. Keep our mind focused on prayer. Another strategy is to thank God for answering the prayer BEFORE it comes to pass!

You can also pray in the Holy Spirit. The next chapter is called “Praying in the Spirit.” We will discuss this more in that chapter. “...with all prayer and requests, praying at all times in the Spirit, and being watchful to this end in all perseverance and requests for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18).

You can also speak Bible verses on that subject. As Paul said in Romans 10:17, “So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” As an example, if you have been praying for a financial breakthrough, read aloud Bible verses aloud about fi-

nances. If you have been praying for healing, read aloud verses about healing. These items will build up your faith.

Another vital key in our approach to prayer is to pray according to the will of God. As mentioned in the last chapter, we do not want to be selfish towards God. In the western world, there is an entitlement mentality. He does not owe us anything. We owe Him everything. God will help you with your basic needs. Before we pray upwardly, we must look inwardly. Always look at your intention for asking. Are you following the desires of this world? Are you following the ‘crowd’? Do you want to exalt yourself over someone else?

While you can pray at any time, it is a great idea to set apart time every day to communicate to God through prayer. This special contact with Him will sustain you. Fifteen minutes or so a day is a good starting place. If you get behind during the week, you can always use Sabbath to catch up. We are all busy; make time to pray. He eagerly desires for us to commune with Him. In my private prayer time, I prefer to be on my knees and still before Him or sitting in a chair. Find a way to pray in your private time so that you can focus and reverence Him. The time, place, and position are up to you.

When you pick a certain location to pray every day, you want to create the right environment so you can focus. One way to do this is play worship music while you pray. Another way is to purchase a prayer shawl (also known as a *tallit*). Using this garment in prayer time will help you focus. To learn more about the *tallit*, read our booklet “Our Hebrew Roots”. It is available for free download off of the website.

When you first start to pray, you may experience a flood of thoughts going through your mind. The tips in this chapter create a spiritual atmosphere that helps you concentrate. Be consistent every day and keep pressing through. The Lord will help you.

Chapter 5

Praying in the Spirit

There are times when we do not know what to pray in our mind because we have experienced something traumatic. We may not have the words to pray. We may have trouble concentrating because our life is busy. One way to fight through this is to pray in the Spirit.

Paul wrote to us and said, “14 For if I pray in another language, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (I Cor. 14:14-15).

Paul said “I will pray with my spirit” and “I will pray with my understanding”. There is a time and place for both. We do not have to get rid of one for the other. When we pray in the Spirit, our understanding will be unfruitful. This means that we will not know in our natural mind what we are praying. We are letting the Lord pray through us in the Spirit. Praying in tongues is praying according to the will of God.

“26 In the same way, the Spirit also helps our weaknesses, for we do not know how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 He who searches the hearts knows what is on the Spirit’s mind, because he makes intercession for the saints according to God. 28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:26-28).

Praying in tongues will impart into your spirit the sense that God is working everything out when you do not naturally understand. It also builds your faith.

“But you, beloved, keep building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 1:20).

Previously, we discussed how hearing the Bible increases your faith. Because praying in tongues is the very Words of God and the Will of God flowing from your vessel, it builds up the new man inside of you. It makes you spiritually stronger. It helps you in your time of weakness.

To learn more about this subject, read the booklet “Be Filled With The Spirit”. It can be downloaded off of our website, www.hungryheartsministry.com for free!

Chapter 6

Hearing the Voice of God

We have covered much ground relating to prayer and how we communicate to God. It would be easy to do all the talking when we pray, but a vital component of prayer is that we learn to LISTEN to God! In fact, some of my best prayers are simply times when I am silent in the presence of God. Remember the Lord's prayer? "Your will be done, your Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven". You want to know His will for your life. The only way to do this is to listen.

If you pray and ask God for wisdom, strength, or anything – sit silently before Him so that you can receive from Him. You want to hear Him speak back to you.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

"Call to me, and **I will answer you**, and will show you great and difficult things, which you don't know" (Jer. 33:3).

There is an expectation that you will HEAR from God when you ask! Jesus said that His Sheep KNOW His voice. In Jeremiah 33:3, the Lord said "Call and I WILL answer you" – future tense. He will speak to us. We just have to recognize it. As we discussed earlier, "Ask and you shall receive".

Paul warned us that there are many voices in the world. "There are, it may be, so many kinds of sounds in the world, and none of them is without meaning" (I Corinthians 14:10).

We have to distinguish the voice of God from other voices. What other voices exist? First, there are your inner thoughts and feelings. Other people can speak to you. Satan can speak to you. Satan spoke to Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Satan spoke through Peter (Matthew 16:22-23). Finally, God speaks to us. God can use other people, just as He used prophets to speak in

the times of old.

God can speak in many ways. Sometimes He speaks through a dream or a vision. A dream mainly happens at night. A vision occurs during the day. Most of the time when God speaks to me, it comes as a thought inside of me (mind, heart, or spirit). Jesus lives within us, so His speech will arise from within us. The Holy Spirit awakens the mind of Christ within us.

Sometimes He speaks as a still small voice. It can be very subtle. At times, His voice is strong and cannot be denied. His Spirit can move on you in different intensities. Ask God to help you be sensitive to His leading and discern His voice.

Remember Paul's words. There are many sounds in the world. Not only does God speak to us, but others speak to us as well. Satan can also speak to you in your thoughts. You have your own person, human thoughts. Other people can influence your thoughts. This means we must learn to test what we receive. How do we do this?

Always test a voice against the Bible. If you think a voice is speaking to you and telling you to sin or the voice contradicts the Word of God, then you must ignore it. This is where reading the Bible every day will become vital. Use research tools such as biblegateway.com to search the Bible for key words you received in your heart/mind. Be sure to review the booklet "Understanding the Bible—Beginner's Edition" to apply this.

Another way to go about testing the sound you hear is to get still before the Lord in your quiet time and ask the Lord very simply: "Please Lord, I earnestly ask that you speak to your servant and clarify this word." Prepare to receive communication from Him. You can also spend time praying in tongues before you sit still before the Lord. It will remove human thoughts and clear your spirit to receive from Him.

We might not always recognize the voice of the Lord. If you read

I Samuel 3:1-10, God spoke to Samuel three times and he did not recognize the Word of the Lord. The high priest, who was the highest spiritual authority in the land, did not recognize God's voice until the third time.

Make sure to write down the words you receive from God. As God told Jeremiah, "The LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'Write all the words that I have spoken to you in a book'" (Jeremiah 30:2). Moreover, compare the words you receive in your spirit to what you have already received in the past. God is consistent

You can also talk to others who are known to hear from the Lord. This is extremely important as certain people are spiritual mentors for your life. Samuel went to the high priest to ask for clarification of what he heard. As the Bible tells us, "Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the others discern" (1 Cor. 14:29) What we perceive to be the voice of God needs to be judged by others. Talk to others in your church leadership. They are appointed by God to help you.

"7 Remember your leaders, men who spoke to you the word of God, and considering the results of their conduct, imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever...17Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they watch on behalf of your souls, as those who will give account, that they may do this with joy, and not with groaning, for that would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13-7-8, 17)

Jesus said: "Take heed what you hear. With whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you, and more will be given to you who hear" (Mark 4:24).

We will be judged by God based upon what we say when we pray, but we will also be judged on how we hear (and if we heard). Be patient; do not rush. Learning the voice of the Lord is a process, and it will take time. He eagerly desires to reveal Himself to you in the special way that He has purposed just for you.

Chapter 7

Who Should I Pray For?

Well, in short, we should pray for everyone! But, I have listed some specific examples/Bible verses below. Keep these examples in mind as you pray.

Pray For Your Political Leaders and Those in Authority

It is easy to criticize and even curse your leaders. The Bible tells us to pray for our leaders first of all.

“1 I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and givings of thanks be made for all men: 2 for kings and all who are in high places, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,” (1Timothy 2:1-3)

We want to pray for our leaders to make the right decisions. Whether it's the President, a Congressman, a local ruler, or a judge on any level, we want to pray for wisdom. Their decisions will have a direct influence on you. Pray for God to save them in truth and fill them with His Spirit. When Paul wrote this, Rome had an evil ruler. It is important that we pray for leaders no matter what we might think about them. Pray for your boss and others at work. If those above you are blessed, you will be blessed as well.

Praying for leaders includes church leaders. They watch over you and have to give an account to God. We should have a heart to see them make the right decision at all times. “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they watch on behalf of your souls, as those who will give account, that they may do this with joy, and not with groaning, for that would be unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

Pray For Those Who Curse You And Mistreat You

“But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44)

It would be easy to hate people who mistreat us. Jesus prayed for all of us while we were yet sinners (John Chapter 17).

Pray For Others –

There are many ways that we pray for others.

Pray For Others To Receive The Truth.

“1 Brothers, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God is for Israel, that they may be saved” (Rom. 10:1).

“But as for me, my prayer is to you, The LORD, in an acceptable time. God, in the abundance of your loving kindness, answer me in the truth of your salvation” (Psalms 69:13).

Pray For The Faith of Others Not to Fail

“...but I prayed for you, that your faith would not fail. You, when once you have turned again, establish your brothers” (Luke 22:32)

Pray For The Sick (physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally)

“13 Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praises. 14 Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the assembly, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, 15 and the prayer of faith will heal him who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:13-15).

Pray For The Word of God to Spread Without Hindrance

“Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, even as also with you” (2Thess. 3:1)

Pray For Those Who Are Persecuted

“Peter therefore was kept in the prison, but constant prayer was made by the assembly to God for him” (Acts 12:5)

Continually Pray For Others

“I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers” (Philemon 1:4).

Pray For Your Congregation

Pray for unity in your congregation and that your church would be of one mind in Christ. Pray against in-fighting and dissension.

Praying For Self

You need guidance, strength and wisdom. Even Jesus would pray to the Father for strength. Remember, we have not because we ask not.

Strength

“40 When he was at the place, he said to them, ‘Pray that you don’t enter into temptation.’ 41 He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and he knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’ 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him” (Luke 22:40-43).

Thanksgiving

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2)

Pray For Help With Anxiety

“6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6-7).

Praying for others and even those we hate will keep you from feeling selfish because you are pouring out your heart and spirit for the welfare of someone else without expecting a return. This is the way of GIVE. It is out flowing concern for others.

These are just some of the many examples of who we pray for and the types of prayers we can pray. Consider these as you pray throughout the week.

Chapter 8

Pray with Purpose

When we pray, we should pray from within; we should pray like we mean it. When you need prayer, do you want others to pray with sincerity, fervency and intensity? Of course! You should pray the same! Remember “Love your neighbor as yourself”.

“16 Confess your offenses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The insistent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it didn’t rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 He prayed again, and the sky gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit” (James 5:16-18).

The prophet Elijah is a model of prayer. James told us that our prayers should be effective and fervent. This literally means effective and powerful. Effectiveness in prayer means taking the right approach. Powerful means drawing upon the power of the Holy Spirit within us and directing it out through prayer. When you do this, you may pray softly or loudly. You may weep, laugh, or show any number of emotions. Praying powerfully means using your entire vessel to direct that prayer towards the intended purpose.

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:38).

When you pour out your prayers with power and efficiency, God will answer with an even greater amount of power than what you put in! What we pour out will be poured back out into your life in your time of need!

Some people ask questions such as – “How many times should you pray for something?”; “How long should I pray?”; and

“When should I expect an answer?”

“When Should I Expect an Answer?”

Some prayers require instant action. If a tornado is coming, you need God to act right then. Other prayers, such as the salvation of a lost loved one or the answer to a question, may take time. The mighty prophet Jeremiah received a revelation from God ten days after he asked (Jeremiah 42:1-7). Hannah prayed for a child, but it took years before she had one (I Samuel 1:1-14).

Sometimes, God withholds an answer until we are broken before Him. Brokenness means we are empty of ourselves. You must have total surrender before God. What does total surrender mean? When you realize that the absolute only way something can be done is by God’s divine intervention. This is a constant theme of this booklet. God does this so that when He answers, you will dedicate the answer to Him and give Him all the credit (glory). Hannah devoted the baby she had to God. God gave her many more after this (I Samuel 2:1-5).

There may be other reasons the answer does not come in the time-frame we think it should. Sometimes there is action required on another person’s part. Consider the example of praying for others to make wise decisions. You can pray for a person to receive wisdom. You can pray them up to the point of decision, but he/she must make the decision under his/her own will. There can be countless reasons as to the timing of an answered prayer. This is where our faith becomes so important.

“How many times should you pray for something?” and “How long should I pray?”

Pray until that prayer is answered or God tells you to stop. Elijah prayed about 60 words and fire fell from Heaven (I Kings 18:36-38). He prayed seven times for rain to come (I Kings 18:41-46). Jesus prayed twice for the man who was sick (Mark 8:22-26) and three times for strength in the Garden (Mark 14:32-42).

God actually told Jeremiah to stop praying for the people of

Judah because they refused to make the right decision. “Therefore don’t pray for this people. Don’t lift up a cry or prayer for them or make intercession to me; for I will not hear you” (Jer. 7:16).

A better way to clarify answers to these questions is to look at the example Jesus gave us of prayer warrior. His example was a widow woman.

Luke 18:2-8

2 saying, “There was a judge in a certain city who didn’t fear God, and didn’t respect man. 3 A widow was in that city, and she often came to him, saying, ‘Defend me from my adversary!’ 4 He wouldn’t for a while, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God, nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will defend her, or else she will wear me out by her continual coming.’ ” 6 The Lord said, “Listen to what the unrighteous judge says. 7 Won’t God avenge his chosen ones who are crying out to him day and night, and yet he exercises patience with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

We have to press in and keep praying. God is looking for a people who will believe in His all-sufficient provision. He is looking for people who will simply believe that He is who He says He is. He is looking for a people humble enough to rely on Him.

Prayer is an enemy of our sinful, human nature, which is hostile to God’s Spirit. The human nature or flesh of man wants to put life on auto-pilot. Prayer is something we must choose to do. We must set aside to reach out to the God of Israel. This requires that we put aside other things, whether sports, recreation, or any another activity that is non-essential. Prayer is essential, and we cannot represent God without it.

As you practice these essential keys, you will learn to flow in prayer. The amount of time you pray will be fruitful. You will learn to pray with fervency and effectiveness.

Sample Prayers

In this chapter, we give some sample prayers for you to pray in specific situations. This will help you get started if you do not know what to pray.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Great God in Heaven above, I thank you for all that you have given to me. I thank you for sending your Son to die for me that I might be one of your very children. I thank you for salvation and opening my eyes to your goodness. I thank you for your Holy Spirit within me that you gave to me for strength. Thank you for providing for me in every way during my life. Thank you for the family, friends, and the church that you have blessed me with. I thank you for everything you have graciously given to me. Help me to be appreciative and I ask for wisdom to handle these blessings in a way that pleases you. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Prayer for Wisdom (you or others)

God I pray for wisdom for _____ (name). I ask that (he/she) would be full of wisdom from Heaven. I ask God that (he or she) would receive this wisdom and apply it. (He or She) needs guidance in a difficult situation. I pray that (he or she) would be able to see the benefits of choosing your ways. Help (him/her) to recognize that this wisdom has come from you, appreciate it, and give you Glory for it! In Jesus name, Amen.

Prayer For Salvation and Truth

God I intercede on behalf of _____ (name). (He or she) is lost and is living without you. (He or she) is living a way of life that is destructive to self and others. (He or she) is full of emptiness. God, I humbly ask that you would reveal yourself to (him or her). I ask that you would do miracles and wonders to move this person into your perfect will. I pray that (he/she) would feel the emptiness of living life without you. Help (him/her) to see that there is a way that is better than the road (he/she) is on. Save (him/her) God! Show (him/her) the Way! In Jesus name, Amen!

Prayer is among the most important aspects of a believer's new life. It is simply the way that we communicate and fellowship with God. It is the process where the will of God becomes one with our heart, mind, and spirit. God desires a relationship with you. In this booklet, you will learn the basics of prayer and how to use this powerful tool.



Kelly McDonald, Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. He has written 40 books and booklets on pursuing Jesus Christ. He has been preaching since 2007 and is available to speak at your church upon request.