



The Power of Prayer

October 2023

Rev. Dr. Victor Thomas

Mount Olive Church Ministries

Hartford, CT

The Power of Prayer

As we continue to study the importance of prayer in our lives. We all must realize that prayer is an essential part of our relationship with the Lord.

Prayer is nothing more than talking to God about everything. Not just asking Him for things, but also thanking Him for what He has already done.

There are several types of prayer we can employ to show our gratitude and thankfulness to the Lord.

Four Basic Forms of Prayer

- Prayer of Blessing and Adoration (praising God)
- Prayer of Petition (asking for what we need, including forgiveness)
- Prayer of Intercession (asking for what others need)
- Prayer of Thanksgiving (for what God has given and done)

Prayer of Blessing and Adoration

In this prayer we express praise and honor to God. We praise God for giving us life, for the wonder and beauty of our world, and for all the many blessings we enjoy.

We open ourselves up to praise God for all the wonders of creation. This form of prayer encourages bodily expression, such as standing with arms raised or dancing.

[Psalm 145](#), is a beautiful adoration [prayer](#) for God's provision:

“I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.
One generation shall commend your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.

Prayer of Petition

This is probably the most familiar prayer form of prayer. We are often taught to ask God for the things we need, but asking and praying for them are not necessarily the same.

When we pray our petitions, we are asking God, who loves us very much, for something that we believe is good—for ourselves or for others. By using this form of prayer, we are mindful of the needs of others as well as of our own needs.

We are aware that God wants us to bring our problems and worries to prayer knowing that he will always hear and answer those prayers.

God may answer our prayers in a different way and in a different timeframe than we are seeking but God will always give us what we need.

Prayers of petition serve to remind us that God expects us to care for one another and for all his creation.

We can pray about the ordinary experiences of life—for people who are sick, for someone who needs a job, for help in our schoolwork, for a safe trip.

We pray for peace in our families and in our world. We can also express our sorrow and contrition to God in our prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 NLT

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

19 And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.

Prayer of Intercession

This form of prayer is prayer on behalf of others. This form of prayer can be a source of blessing upon others, the Church, and our world.

Because we know that we all should be intercessors for each other, the bible encourages us to pray for others. Such prayer can bring us great strength and courage and great peace of mind and heart.

The Bible commands us to pray for one another, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” **(James 5:16 ESV)**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

This form of prayer helps us to be grateful for God’s many blessings, spiritual and temporal, and helps us to recognize and appreciate all the good things God gives to us.

Reserving some time to praise and thank God for his gifts—the gift of life; the gift of our families and friends; the gift of food, clothing, and shelter; and the numerous other gifts we often take for granted—helps us to form a true spirit of gratitude.

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Praying in the Spirit

When praying, we must not approach talking to God haphazardly or without regard of His awesome wonder.

We must approach the throne of grace with boldness but also in reverence. Showing the Lord what a privilege it is to carry everything to God in prayer.

“What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer!”

Prayer is what gives us access to the Most High God who can do anything. This access means that you can talk to God about anything.

One of the great promises is this: “In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (**Proverbs 3:6**).

One definition of prayer is asking God to act. “You do not have, because you do not ask” (**James 4:2**).

However, there are consequences of not praying.

A blatant example of not praying was when the Gibeonites deceived Joshua. The Gibeonites were in fear that they would soon be vanquished by the Israelites like other nations that had been conquered.

And they would have been. But Joshua believed that these people were sincere and gave them indemnity from being destroyed by swearing an oath to them.

But then comes that most ominous verse: **they “did not ask counsel from the Lord”** (Joshua 9:14).

We should never make any life decision without seeking counsel from the Lord. We tend to lean to our trusted friends, self-help books, or subject matter experts.

Not realizing that we have all these things and more, in Christ Jesus.

He is all knowing – He knows all about you and your circumstances.

He is all seeing – He sees where you are – your beginning and your end.

He is all powerful – He has the ability to handle every situation.

Not praying, then, is to forfeit a close relationship with God. He confides in those who fear Him (**Psalms 25:14**). There is no greater privilege than this—having a close friendship with God.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,

Oh, what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer.

Praying in the Spirit – We Have Help

Praying in the Spirit is prayer with divine help. It's trusting in faith and relying on God to hear, understand, and act.

Praying in the Spirit is a gift to be received through faith in Christ Jesus.

Scripture about Praying in the Spirit

- “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people” ([Ephesians 6:18](#)).
- “But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,” ([Jude 1:20](#)).
- “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans” ([Romans 8:26](#)).

Praying in the Spirit is distinct from praying in tongues.

Some teach that praying in the Spirit is synonymous with praying in tongues.

But as tongues is a gift of the Spirit ([1 Corinthians 12:8-11](#)), not a fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)), not every Christian can speak in tongues or should speak in tongues if there is not an interpreter.

Many confuse this a praying in the spirit, but

Yet, Paul instructs Christians to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions,” ([Ephesians 6:18](#)). Therefore, we can know that praying in the Spirit is distinct from praying in tongues.

“‘Praying in the Spirit’ is altogether a divine activity that one appropriates through faith in Jesus Christ and in His finished work on [the cross](#)...

Why Is Prayer Important?

Prayer is an incredible, and at times, an overlooked blessing for the child of God.

When we belong to God, through saving faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, we have the unique opportunity and *honor* to approach Him in beautiful and sacred communion.

Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross—taking the penalty for our sin in the shedding of His blood—we can enter the *Most Holy Place*, something allowed only by the High Priest in Old Testament times.

Prayer aligns our hearts with our Creator and Sustainer and can become a treasured time of personal worship.

Prayer was Jesus' communication to God the Father while He lived on earth.

Prayer was His means, along with the Holy Spirit, of knowing and carrying out God's will.

Prayer was a vital part of the intimate fellowship between God the Father and Christ His Son.

Think of the most important relationship in your life. How strong would that relationship be if the communication between you stopped today?

Based on Jesus' prayer life, what is the primary function of prayer?

If Jesus, the Son of God, was constantly dependent upon the Father through prayer, how could we possibly think it is not necessary for us?

As we close today, pray and ask God to show you some changes you need to make to become more consistent and dependent upon Him in prayer.

(Hint: Being a part of this study is a huge step in the right direction. God will be faithful as you work to become devoted to prayer.)

