

Communion with the Father

LUKE 11:1-4 and MATTHEW 6:9-13 (Sermon on the Mount)

It was to be a lesson, not just on how to pray, but also how to experience the deep foundations of communicating with God. He taught that prayer is to be the basis of our Christian life. His instructions revealed how all Christians could pray in ways that agree with the will of God. In His faithfulness, our Heavenly Father would respond. In these Scriptures, Jesus set the pattern for prayer. If it would be prayed and agreed to on earth, it would be honored and agreed to in Heaven.

1 JOHN 5:14-15

Jesus taught that our personal prayer time is to be an intimate time of communication and communion, sharing our requests with our Heavenly Father. Prayer exposes the treasures of a person's heart. God sees this and it moves Him to answer.

- Are you praying for God's will to be done... or are you praying for your will to be done. God's will is always perfect and the best thing for you.
- God's perfect will brings us blessings. We can only find them in the Kingdom of God. Our will without giving His will priority is never the best thing to pray for. His will is always perfect.

The Lord's Prayer is to be used as a pattern for our prayers, from deep within our hearts. Here are some vital characteristics that belong in the hearts of those who reach out to our Heavenly Father through prayerful communion with God.

Our prayers should reflect the Father's kind of love. He put His love into our hearts when we gave our lives to Jesus. Because of this, our prayers should be intentional and deliberate. They should be consistent. They will cost us because they will require us to apply them with unselfish love. When you pray, "*agape*" love becomes the spiritual place where you erect your altar of communion, petition and praise to God.

Have complete trust in the Divine One to whom you pray. This is vital for two reasons:



First, your Heavenly Father responds to faith. He hears you when you pray in faith and it pleases Him.

Second, your faith gains strength when you pray with loving trust in Him. Prayers of faith will build your faith!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:7-9, HEBREWS 11:6 and PROV.3:5-6

Always pray with reverence for your Heavenly Father. To have reverence means to honor, respect, worship and adore Him. He is worthy of all this and so much more.

We often pray because we do not know what to do. God will respond to your prayers and give you wisdom and understanding of your situation. **PROVERBS 9:10** His answer to your prayer will direct you to a wise choice. Listen within yourself as you pray. We often pray without listening within ourselves for our Heavenly Father's answer. Open your spiritual ears. Listen in your spirit! He will probably speak with a still small voice. You have to listen.

Treat your entire prayer as an opportunity to experience a devotional, meaningful moment with your Heavenly Father. Everything else should be secondary to your opportunity to worship and commune with Him.

Jesus' instructions were not about praying to Him. He provided a specific model of how we are to pray to our Heavenly Father. It is a model without rituals. It lacks the boundaries of religion.

- Build your prayer around purity, reverence and love.
- God is interested in your life. He is not concerned with how you structure your prayers. He wants to listen to those things that matter to you. Just tell Him about them.
- You are a child of God. You have free access to Him, because you are saved and reconciled to Him. You have peace with God and can call Him "*Abba Father.*"

ROMANS 5:1-2 - You always have access to Him.

Jesus has given us a model with which we can shape our hearts. Then, our hearts will shape our words and they will be pleasing to the Father. As He answers, He will shape the world around us. He will speak and it will happen. God is for you. Who could possibly be against you with any success? Answer: Nobody!

Two Vital Keys to Receiving an Answer to Your Prayers

There are a number of keys to having your prayers answered. Among the obvious ones would be to pray in faith; to repent of your sins before coming to God; to pray the will of God; and walk in forgiveness toward anyone who has offended you. All of these principles can be found in Luke 11:1-4 and Matthew 6:9-13. There are two other principles for receiving an answer to your prayers that I would like to share with you. They come from the Old Testament narrative of Elijah and the Prophets of Baal. If you have studied the Bible, you may be familiar with the story. It is found in 1 Kings, Chapter 18, in which Elijah, God's prophet, mocked and ridiculed the prophets of the false god Baal. Elijah was up against eight hundred of them and challenged them to sacrifice a bull and call on their false god. They agreed and for almost a full day they performed their useless antics. Of course, the idol they served was incapable of answering. This was no surprise to Elijah, or to any of us who know our God.

Now it was Elijah's turn. He slaughtered a bull and laid it on an altar of twelve stones he had constructed. Then he dug a large trench around the altar. Here's the biblical record of what happened next:

1 Kings 18:33-36, 38-39 (NKJV)

"And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." {34} Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. {35} So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. {36} And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word." ...Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the

water that was in the trench. {39} Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!"

From this narrative, we can find two vital keys to answered prayer.

First Vital Key: Let your prayers always be filled with the primary motivation that the results will give glory to God.

This is always to be our priority. It will help you align your prayers with His will for your life. In Verse 36, Elijah prayed, *"Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant..."* This prayer could be paraphrased to say the following:

"Lord God, let the answer to my prayer send the message for everyone who hears it that You are to be glorified. I am Your servant. I put my purpose and trust in you. I ask that however you answer my prayer, Your glory will be seen."

Second Vital Key: When you find a need to pray, position yourself in an attitude communion with God.

As you worship Him, listen for His voice. He loves to speak to His children from this place of close communion, especially in stress-filled times! In the midst of your challenge, expect to hear from God. Then, mix what you hear in your heart with your request. You will find yourself praying boldly in a great deal of agreement with God... even if you cannot see or understand the end from the beginning. Praying in close communion with God will capture His attention and He will respond. That's what Elijah did. He made his circumstances a place of prayer filled, worshipful communion. Then he prayed for fire to fall. God was pleased and the fire fell with great power.

As you can see, the prophet never doubted what the results of his prayer would be. His worship and communion established His position in the Lord. He then prayed boldly with great confidence. When you pray, never allow the situation to affect your prayers. It's not about the conditions around you. It's always about your position in Christ. You can come boldly to the throne of Grace, knowing He willingly and lovingly hears and answers.

Prayer Principles

- [1] Our Heavenly Father is always ready to grant us an audience and hear our petitions with interest, affection and grace.
- [2] Keep God's name holy, far above all the personal issues of your life.
- [3] When necessary, pray for forgiveness. You will receive it and all heaven will celebrate. Then continue your prayer in the favor of God.
- [4] God's great desire is that, as we pray, His kingdom establishes itself ever more firmly in our hearts.
- [5] Prayer is a reflection of the completely sure hope, trust and faith we enjoy as our heavenly Father's children.
- [6] To pray, "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" is to agree with, and submit fully to God.
- [7] To pray, "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" is to fill your heart with the delight and pleasures of blessing God with your worship.
- [8] Praying today for "*our daily bread*" builds our trust that God will provide for our all our tomorrows.
- [9] As we pray for our "*daily bread,*" our heavenly Father knows exactly what we need. He will not disappoint us. We should not disappoint Him with how we steward what He gives us.
- [10] Unforgiveness is deadly. If necessary, leave the altar of prayer. Go, ask for forgiveness and forgive. Then, come back and petition your heavenly Father in prayer.
- [11] When we disallow the voices of unforgiveness, we allow and empower forgiveness to speak.
- [12] Forgiveness of sins from God to us, and us toward others, brings right standing with God. It brings favor, blessings and daily grace.
- [13] When adversities come, heartfelt prayers touch God, and bring us grace, patience and endurance.
- [14] The battleground is essentially the mind. Pray to have the mind of Christ.
- [15] We will need more than bread for our lives. Allow yourself to pray for and depend completely on the Lord. Feed on every word from God.
- [16] Never use your prayers to pressure or test the Father so

you can gain some advantage. Respond to pressure by praying Scripture. Prayer defeats pressure.

[17] Every temptation is a great opportunity to pray.

Prayer is to be bathed in unselfishness, regardless of the pressures of the moment.

[18] Expect the assault to come, but also expect the Deliverer to come with the answer to your petition.

[19] Make it your habit to finish your prayers by acknowledging the Father in all His eternal greatness.

[20] Pray with an awareness of this unshakeable truth. The Father is there to care for, defend, and provide for you. He is forever faithful.

[21] Pray in the confidence of knowing that your heavenly Father has placed in you the potential to exercise the power of heaven to bring your prayers to pass.

[22] Begin your prayers by declaring the holiness of the Father. End them by declaring your trust in Him. Then you will say "*Amen*" to His faithfulness.

