

Church of God Sunday School



THE CHRISTIAN'S TOOLBOX — PRAYER

DAILY READINGS:

- Monday:** Continual prayer is necessary (James 5:16; Ephesians 6:18; Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- Tuesday:** Ask for wisdom and direction from God (Jeremiah 10:23; Psalm 25:4-5; James 1:5-8).
- Wednesday:** God will hear you when you pray (Psalm 17:6; Psalm 77:1; Isaiah 38:5).
- Thursday:** Sin is a barrier to God hearing your prayers (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:2).
- Friday:** A story of two different prayers (Luke 18:9-14).
- Saturday:** Believe when you pray (Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 5:14-15).

MEMORY VERSE: *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."*
—Philippians 4:6

Take a deep breath, and then let it out. How does that feel? How long can you hold your breath? How do you feel afterwards? Although there are divers who have held their breath for many minutes, the average person can only hold his or her breath for about 30 seconds. Consider how vital breath is to your body and how often you need it. It has been said that prayer is the breath of the soul. Just as you need breath to stay alive physically, you also need prayer to stay alive spiritually. Just as a breath once in a while is not enough for the physical body, a prayer once in a while will not keep you alive spiritually either.

What Is Prayer?

Do you know the key to every good relationship? It is communication. When there is little or no communication, relationships will suffer. For instance, would it be a problem if your mother or father never talked to you? If they had expectations concerning your behavior and house rules but never told you what they were? What if you had a job where your employer never communicated with you? Would it be stressful not knowing what was expected out of you? Many books are written about the subject of communication—how important it is and how to communicate better with others. Communication is giving information about something to someone else. Good communication is sharing ideas, thoughts, and problems that are important to you with someone who you believe will understand and be able to help you.

Prayer is communication with God. It is telling Him about the problems, burdens, and thoughts that are very important to you. It is also letting Him know how thankful you are for what He has done for you. Just as a relationship with your parents, friends, teachers, etc. requires good communication, communication with God is necessary as well. Prayer is the communication cable that connects you and God.

Why Should I Pray?

"Wise is he who in the day of trouble knows his true source of strength and fails not to pray"
(E. M. Bounds).

One excuse too many people give for not praying is that they do not have enough time. Martin Luther once said: "I have a busy day and much to do tomorrow. I must get up three hours earlier and spend it in prayer." He did not let the busyness of his day prevent him from prayer, but rather it made him more aware of his need to talk to God first. Every day brings challenges, problems, decisions, or trials. It does not matter whether you are rich or poor, sick or healthy,

young or old, according to Job 14:1, life is "full of trouble." You will need help, guidance, and direction. Jeremiah 10:23 tells us that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." If you cannot determine which way to go and which decisions to make, you must talk to the One who is "mighty in strength and wisdom" (Job 36:5). Only He has all the right answers.

When Should I Pray?

Too many Christians consider prayer as something on their daily "to-do" list. They believe it is necessary, but it becomes more of a chore than a privilege. Often it is remembered right before falling asleep at night, and so a quick prayer is offered up to make the conscience feel better. Is that the best time to talk to God? How strong do you think a marriage would be if the only communication was a few words before the husband and wife fell asleep? God deserves our very best. When are you at your best? Some people wake up very slowly. Perhaps immediately after getting out of bed is not the best time for anything other than a short prayer. Likewise, some people are too sleepy right before going to bed to pray a lengthy prayer. Ask God to help you know when is the best time of the day for you to talk to Him.

"Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it" (Corrie ten Boom).

Are you limited to praying only once a day? What kind of a relationship would you have with God if you spoke to Him more than once per day? Daniel was able to go through a terrible trial of being thrown into a den of lions. No doubt, his habit of prayer three times every day (which he established long before this) gave him the spiritual strength he needed. Think of how many times you talk to God every day. Do you pray before every meal? Do you say a prayer before you leave home, asking for protection and help? Do you talk to God before going to bed at night? Do you have a time of more lengthy prayer, a time when you are alone and can tell God all the burdens and concerns you have? Do you ever say quick prayers of thanksgiving? Think of ways you can add extra prayer time in your day. Just as your relationships with family and friends improve with regular communication, so will your relationship with God deepen and improve as you talk to Him more often.

First Thessalonians 5:17 says to "Pray without ceasing." Is that possible? Does that mean you should always be on your knees, praying out loud to God? No. God knows you have to go to school, go to work, and that you have other responsibilities. God does want you to live in a way that you are constantly aware of His presence. Prayer should be your first response to every difficult situation.



How Should I Pray?

Have you ever heard someone pray a beautiful prayer and thought, "I can't pray like that; I shouldn't even try"? Jesus told a story about two different prayers in Luke 18:9-14. The first prayer was much lengthier than the second (which was only seven words). Yet, it was the second prayer that touched God's heart. Why? The first man had pride in his heart, but the second man was humble. Do not be concerned when you cannot pray the same way as someone else. God wants to hear from you. Your unique personality will make your prayer your own. Speak to God from your heart—honestly, humbly, and sincerely—and He will hear you.

In Sunday school, teachers often tell the smaller children to bow their heads, fold their hands, and close their eyes. Why is this important? It is teaching the children the importance of reverence during prayer. Our attitude before and during prayer will determine whether God hears our prayers or not. Before praying, were you thinking, saying, or looking at something God would not approve of? Too often people have allowed ungodly things into their lives and then think they can pray over top of all of that. If you have allowed sin into your life, Isaiah 59:2 warns that "your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

What is your attitude during prayer? Do you realize you are in the presence of the One who created the universe, the One who knows everything and can do anything? As you learn more about who God truly is and what He can do, your prayers should be more reverent, more serious, and more thankful. Also, as you begin to understand who God is, your faith will increase, and you will pray with "confidence [knowing] . . . if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).



1. What is the key to good relationships? _____
2. It has been said that prayer is the _____ of the soul.
3. What is prayer? _____

3. Why should you pray? _____

4. When should you pray? _____
5. How can you pray without ceasing? _____
6. How should you pray? _____
7. What can hinder prayer? _____
8. When can you add more prayer time into your day? _____

A Few Prayer Tools

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. KEEP A PRAYER JOURNAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – write down prayer burdens and date – write down answers to prayers and date 2. PRAY WITH THANKSGIVING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – begin prayers with thanks – sets the tone of your prayers 3. READ ENCOURAGING BOOKS ABOUT PRAYER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – read books about answered prayers 4. SEARCH FOR ANSWERED PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – this will build your personal faith | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. TALK TO GOD ANYTIME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – don't limit your conversation to prayer time only – make prayer as easy and necessary as breathing 6. BE SURE YOU ARE PRAYING IN GOD'S WILL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bible study and prayer work together – Read 1 John 5:14 |
|--|---|



What Does the Bible Say

Draw a line to the matching Scripture

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| ◆ Pray without ceasing | ◆ 1 John 5:14 |
| ◆ Ask according to God's will | ◆ Colossians 1:3 |
| ◆ Do not use vain repetitions | ◆ James 4:3 |
| ◆ Do not be "careful" (anxious) | ◆ Philippians 4:6 |
| ◆ Ask in faith | ◆ James 1:6 |
| ◆ Do not ask "amiss" (with the wrong motive) | ◆ 2 Chronicles 7:14 |
| ◆ Pray humbly | ◆ 2 Thessalonians 1:11 |
| ◆ Pray with thanksgiving | ◆ 1 Thessalonians 5:17 |
| ◆ Pray for others | ◆ Luke 18:1 |
| ◆ Pray continually and not "faint" (lose courage) | ◆ Matthew 6:5 |
| ◆ Do not pray like the hypocrites | ◆ Matthew 6:7 |

About Prayer?