

BETHLEHEM
CHURCH



ROAD MAP

FOR

Prayer

What is Prayer

You may have been told your entire life that prayer is “talking to God.” In a very rudimentary sense this correct, however, if that is all we believe we are doing, we are missing a great deal. Prayer and Bible study are the two key components for necessary communication between God and His children. It is this communication that serves as a foundational block for building a relationship with God.

Prayer is described in the Bible as seeking God’s favor ([Exodus 32:11](#)), pouring out one’s soul to the Lord ([1 Samuel 1:15](#)), crying out to heaven ([2 Chronicles 32:20](#)), drawing near to God ([Psalm 73:28, KJV](#)), and kneeling before the Father ([Ephesians 3:14](#))

Prayer is relational not transactional; it is for a relationship not a bargaining tool with God. Thankfully prayer is based on promises and not on our performance; so, we don’t always have to know what to say or what to do, God’s promises are the same. Prayer is simple and not some equation we have to figure out; while we are going to give you some tools to help your prayer life, there isn’t a set of rules and regulations that have to be accomplished to experience God; however, we want to provide you with some principles to guide you in developing a better relationship with God.

[Click here](#) for a quick YouTube video on Prayer.

Why is Prayer so Important?

Because it Helps Us Know God. As discussed above, prayer serves as a foundational block in our communication with God to build our relationship with God. If we approach prayer in conjunction with a good, deep Bible study we have set the stage to understand God, to know what He is really like, to determine what He wants for us in this life, and to reap the benefits of having a close personal relationship with your Heavenly Father. Prayer is one way we worship God!

Because it Pleases God. We pray to praise God and thank Him and tell Him how much we love Him. We pray to enjoy His presence and tell Him what is going on in our lives. We pray to make requests and seek guidance and ask for wisdom. God loves this exchange with His children, just as we love the exchange we have with our children. Fellowship with God is the heart of prayer. Too often we lose sight of how simple prayer is really supposed to be.

Because it is a Command. We pray because God commands us to pray, for our own good ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)). God knows we need his guidance for major decisions ([Luke 6:12-13](#)); to gain strength to overcome temptation ([Matthew 26:41](#)).

Because it Shows Our Faith and Trust in God. Pray demonstrates our faith in God, that He will do as He has promised in His Word and bless our lives abundantly more than we could ask or hope for ([Ephesians 3:20](#)).

[Click here](#) for a video on the importance of prayer. Get ready to say amen!

What are the Different Types of Prayer?

Depending on who you ask, there are dozens of types of prayer. We are going to focus in on 9 types:

1. **PRAYER OF SUPPLICATION:** Supplication, also known as petitioning, is a form of prayer, wherein we **humbly** ask/plead for God to provide something ([Philippians 4:6](#)). We often see a prayer of supplication as asking God for help us with something that is out of our control. This helps us as a means of praising God and casting worries upon Him releasing them from our hearts and minds. Psalms is filled with prayers of supplication for mercy in Psalm 4:1, for leading in Psalm 5:8, for deliverance in Psalm 6:4, for salvation from persecution in Psalm 7:1. Watch this [video](#) for more on prayer of supplication.
2. **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION:** Intercession or intercessory prayer is praying to God on behalf of others ([Ezekiel 22:30](#)). We see examples throughout the Bible of intercessory prayer for people to be saved (Romans 10:1), the sick (James 5:14), enemies (Jeremiah 29:7); those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44); those who forsake us (2 Timothy 4:16); and all men (1 Timothy 2:1). Intercessory prayer reveals the unselfish nature of a Christian as we seek for God to provide for others and not ourselves. Watch this [video](#) for more on prayer of intercession.
3. **PRAYER OF FAITH:** A prayer of faith is often referred to as a prayer of healing ([James 5:13-15](#)). In James 5 we see though it is not always about a physical ailment it is about spiritual weakness, spiritual weariness, spiritual exhaustion, and spiritual depression, as well as dealing with the suffering and sin that accompanies it. It is also an expectation that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly more than we can imagine and that He will do what He said He will do. It is an exercise of placing our trust in God. We are encouraged as followers/believers to exercise trust in God. So, we pray this prayer to lean on God in his wisdom and understanding and know that all healing comes from him, should he choose to heal the sick person in our lives.
4. **CORPORATE PRAYER:** Corporate prayer is the term used to describe praying together with other people—in small groups or in larger groups of people. It is an important part of the church and in Acts 2:42, we learn that the early church prayed together: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Benefits of Corporate Prayer include:

- **Encouragement** – praying with others serves as an encouragement to the members of the group. There may be those in the group who are struggling with trials and temptations. As they are upheld in prayer, the Holy Spirit brings them encouragement and reassurance of His promises.
- **Unity of purpose** – Corporate prayer has the ability to knit a group together in a bond of fellowship and praise. People are edified and unified in common faith. As

people pray together, they build love and concern for others and display their dependence on God.

- Worship – Corporate prayer brings intimate communion with the Savior.
- Repentance – As people pray, the Holy Spirit brings conviction and draws His children to repentance.

Click on this [video](#) for more on Corporate Prayer

5. **PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT** Praying in the Spirit is prayer with the assistance of the Holy Spirit ([Romans 8:26](#)). Praying in the Spirit requires mental and spiritual conditions for true prayer with the heart, soul, and spirit engaged in it. It is put up with a true heart, and a right spirit, and without hypocrisy; in a spiritual way, and with fervency, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God ([1 Corinthians 14:14-15](#)). Click on this [video](#) for more on Praying in the Spirit
6. **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:** Prayers of giving thanks play an important role in our spiritual relationship with God. We are reminded in [1 Thessalonians 5:18](#) giving thanks is the will of God. We can be thankful for who God is and for the opportunity He gives us to turn to Him in all situations, good and bad. God is always there for us. Our sincere prayers let Him know that we are thankful for that. Prayers of thanksgiving should be a continuous part of our everyday lives. ([Psalm 100:4](#)).
7. **PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE:** Confession here denotes an agreement between you and God for a declaration of your guilt of unrighteousness due to inward conviction ([1 John 1:9](#)). Confession helps us with the following:
 - To come to God for His forgiveness
 - To humble our hearts before God
 - To come to that place of repentance, of forsaking and abandoning sin in our livesRepentance for a believer is reconciliation and restoration into a right relationship to the Lord through Godly sorrow for our sin, such as Peter's betrayal of Jesus in [Luke 22: 61-62](#). Repentance is also a change in attitude and actions as we find in [Isaiah 55:7](#)
8. **PRAYER OF DEDICATION OR CONSECRATION:** A Prayer of Dedication is giving yourself over or committing to God ([Romans 12:1](#)). Consecration is the act of a Christian's will to resolve to make God's interests their own. It is setting aside one's own desires and agreeing to do the Will of God, as seen with Jesus in [Matthew 26:39](#). As we resolve to dedicate ourselves to God, we will naturally consecrate all areas of our lives into the service of God.

How do I Start Praying?

So, let's remember that prayer is communication that serves as a foundational block for building a relationship with God. If we are looking to improve our relationship with God, we simply need to talk to Him. There is no need for formalities or repetitive phrases that aren't heart felt or are so ritualistic that it impersonalizes our talk with God. Simply talk about what is

on your heart. Jesus himself provided us with a model prayer ([Matthew 6:9-13](#)) which contains some elements we can incorporate into our prayers to help us communicate better:

1. Our Father who is in Heaven – We pray as an adopted child into the family of God through Jesus Christ. This indicates we should have a close personal relationship where we can tell our loving Heavenly Father everything.
2. Hallowed Be Thy Name - Hallowed means holy or sanctified so we should revere and praise Him above all else.
3. Thy Kingdom Come - We pray for God’s Kingdom to take form in the here and now so we can live in a world characterized by faith, hope, and love. We also pray for the promise of a new heaven and a new earth” be fulfilled. When that promise is fulfilled, the faithful will live with God in His Kingdom eternally as members of a Holy City in which there is no death, crying, or pain ([Revelation 21:1-4](#)).
4. Thy Will Be Done on Earth as it Is in Heaven - His will is that we praise Him and love one another.
5. Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread – We pray for spiritual sustenance so that we can go out into the world and spread His Message through our words and actions.
6. And Forgive Us Our Trespasses, as We Forgive Those Who Trespass against Us - For times when forgiving someone proves especially difficult, the Bible teaches that a good time to extend forgiveness is during prayer when our minds and hearts are united with God ([Mark 11:25](#)).
7. And Lead Us Not into Temptation - We acknowledge that our free will brings with it human weaknesses. To overcome those weaknesses, we pray here for God to extend His guiding hand over us and grant us the discernment necessary to steer clear of temptation and sin.
8. But Deliver Us from Evil - This petition covers the many times that we do fall prey to temptation and sin. During these times of entanglement, if we continually seek the Lord, He will answer us and deliver us from all of our fears ([Psalm 34:4](#)).

The Lord’s Prayer focuses our thoughts on what’s important in life by summarizing all that we must do to be “good and faithful servants,” namely:

- Call on our Father,
- Revere God,
- Accept His will,
- Know His Word,
- Love each other through forgiveness,
- Resist evil.

Tips for an Effective Prayer Life

Prayer is different for every situation so here are a few tips that can help develop habits that fit for any situation:

1. Have Structure but Allow Spontaneity. We should set aside some dedicated time to spend with God. If we are going to invest in a relationship, we need to ensure we dedicate time to that relationship; however, most of your talk times will be spontaneous. If you pray in a structured context for fifteen or twenty minutes, you will have the rest of your day for random talking possibilities left to enjoy. Have a specific place away from distractions you can go to for clear concise communications. If you are away from your designated prayer place, pray anyway! You can take a break at work and go pray...like Jesus did!
2. Keep a Prayer Journal. We all have busy lives so it only stands to reason that we can focus on things that happen during the day. Keeping a prayer journal brings requests, situations, or praises to our minds to discuss with the Lord. Keep a list of the requests and review them periodically to see how God has answered them so we can remember to give Him thanks. You can use your phone but be careful about the other uses of your phone interfering with your prayer time.
3. Pray about Everything. Let Him become your best friend with whom you want to share all your thoughts. That means you are not just asking Him for things, but you are thanking Him for things, sharing ideas with Him, or just talking with Him. Switch it up in your prayer life as well, some are requests, some are worship, some are thanksgiving. This will keep it fresh!
4. Add Scripture into your Prayer. You cannot go wrong in your prayer time by adding a spiritual song or prayer from Psalms, words of wisdom from Proverbs, or by reminding God of His promises concerning a particular situation and asking Him to intervene according to His Word. By confessing the relevant Scripture verse for your prayer need you are expressing your faith in God's Word to turn it around.
5. Be Specific in your Prayer. God help me. Ever prayed that prayer. Sure, He knows what is on your heart but communication is in the details. Be specific about what you are requesting or thanking God for so it will allow you to expect a specific response; "Aim small, miss small."
6. Have a Prayer Partner. The Bible tells us to bear one another's burdens ([Galatians 6:2](#)) and we can do this through prayer with others. Prayer partners create accountability and tend to create more consistency in our walk with God. Pick someone you trust to know your cares and desires; Husbands and wives often make great prayer partners.....just sayin..... You can pray daily or just talk daily about your prayer time. You can also incorporate a family prayer time!
7. Plan a Prayer Walk. Ever experienced communicating with God on a nature walk, on a bike ride, on a kayaking trip, jumping out of an airplane? Ok, maybe not jumping out of an

airplane, however, I promise you will be definitely connect with God!! There is something to be said for being in nature and talking with God. There are many activities that can be enjoyed while connecting with your Heavenly Father. Just be safe!!!

Helpful Materials on Prayer

Video resources on prayer

[Prayer & Theology: Ask Dr. Betters](#) by Dr. Charles Betters (RightNow Media)

Ask Dr. Betters is a topical video series where Dr. Betters answers questions on suffering and the sovereignty of God. It is MARKINC's hope that Dr. Betters answers will reinforce that God is good and worthy of our trust even when life is difficult and when we struggle to understand Him. Contains 13 videos of 10 minutes or less on different questions on Prayer.

[Praying God's Word for Your Life \(Women\)](#) by Kathi Lipp (RightNow Media)

Many women find it easy to pray for others, but when it come to praying for ourselves, we hesitate. Are my prayers selfish? Are any prayers too big or too small? Kathi Lipp, speaker and author of "Praying God's Word for Your Life," gives simple strategies and encouragement for women to be in the habit of praying with boldness, consistency and expectation.

[40 Days of Prayer](#) by Scott and Karen Hagan (RightNow Media)

What could be different about your life if there were a handful of believers praying for you every day for six weeks straight? In 40 Days of Prayer, Pastor Scott Hagan guides you through an immersion into the Lord's Prayer.

[BOOST YOUR PRAYERS | 7 Secrets to Boost Your Prayer Life!](#) By Allen Parr (YouTube)

How do you become more consistent in prayer? Has your prayer life gotten boring, mundane and stale? Do you sometimes go an entire day or two and forget to pray? This video gives my top 7 tips on how to be more consistent in prayer.

Books/Pamphlets/Articles on the Bible

[The Battle Plan for Prayer: From Basic Training to Targeted Strategies](#) by Stephen Kendrick, Alex Kendrick

The Battle Plan for Prayer begins with prayer's core purpose, its biblical design, and its impact throughout history. Listeners will be guided scripturally through the fundamentals of how effective prayer works, inspired toward a closer, more intimate relationship with God, and shown how to develop specific prayer strategies for each area of life. COST: \$7.79.

[Prayer](#) by Timothy Keller

Christians are taught in their churches and schools that prayer is the most powerful way to experience God. But few receive instruction or guidance in how to make prayer genuinely meaningful. In *Prayer*, renowned pastor Timothy Keller delves into the many facets of this everyday act. COST: \$14.77

Other Online Tools

[Prayermate](#). PrayerMate brings all your prayer points together. Whether it's your personal prayer points for friends and family, regular updates from some fantastic mission organizations, or the latest PDF prayer letter that just arrived in your inbox, PrayerMate puts it all together in one place and helps you get on and pray.