

How To Plan Your Prayers

What am I going to pray to God about?

Most Christians have faced this problem at one time or another.

Many people truly desire to pray, they even set aside time to get on their knees before God.

But they have a problem.

Although they start their prayers out well enough, the words literally pour out to God in heartfelt emotion, the torrent turns to a trickle in a few fleeting minutes.

Although their hearts tell them to go on, their minds simply cannot think of things to say!

But do **not** despair if this happens to you, you are **not** alone in this dilemma. Even Jesus Christ's own disciples implored their Master, "*Lord, teach us to pray,*" [Luke 11:1].

We all need to be taught how to pray, for the ability to pray is not instinctive.

Jesus Christ understood this.

Matthew 26:41 [New King James] "*Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*"

But the weakness of our flesh is no excuse in God's sight, to give up the battle for a better prayer life.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 [New King James] "*pray without ceasing,*"

This means we should maintain a daily schedule or habit of good solid praying time, including but **not** limited to silent prayers throughout the day.

Jesus Christ pointedly taught His disciples in a parable, "*to pray and not lose heart,*" [Luke 18:1].

Paul also admonishes us to "*continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving,*" [Colossians 4:2].

Make a prayer list

Ponder what to pray about ahead of time and then make a prayer list.

Write down what you want to pray about as you see a need or learn about a problem.

Then have your prayer list in front of you when prayer time comes.

At the top of my prayer list is one scripture as a daily reminder.

Isaiah 59:1-3 [New King James] "*Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.*"

God will **not** hear our prayers until this problem has been sorted out.

We have to confess our sins to God the Father, through our High Priest Jesus Christ, both commission and omission sins, also thoughts that lead to sinful actions.

Ask, in total faith, that the blood of Jesus Christ may be a substitute to our deserved death that these sins deserve, also that our faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice will allow Jesus Christ's righteousness be credited to us, [**Romans 4:13, 16, 18-24**].

Only then can we become acceptable to our Holy God and will His ear be open to our prayers.

Jesus Christ's outline prayer

Matthew 6:5-8 [New King James] *“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”*

This passage of scripture, recording the words of Jesus Christ to His disciples, must be foremost in our minds before we pray or even make a prayer list.

All prayer is really a private conversation between us and our God.

Public prayer, as mentioned here, is called by our Saviour as hypocritical.

Group prayer of believers in private is different, [**Acts 5:23-31**] and God will answer such prayers powerfully.

We are also warned against vain repetitions in our prayer, reading prayers from a manual or book of prayers are **not** prayers that come from the heart and human spirit.

Matthew 6:9-13 [New King James] *“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”*

This sample prayer, given by Jesus Christ is, in a sense, an outline of how we should pray. That is, it lists the general subject areas our prayers should cover, and in the general order of priority we should follow.

This is **not** a prayer that is to be repeated again and again. Jesus Christ had already called such repetitions as pagan, [**verse 7**].

In making our prayer list we should divide it into sections that correspond to Jesus Christ's sample prayer outline.

After our confession of our sins and seeking, in faith, that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will be a substitute death in the place of our deserved death, [**Romans 6:23**], we should **acknowledge God for who He is and what He is.**

“Our Father” – God who gave us life, [**John 1:1-4, 14**] and now sustains our life, [**Colossians 1:16-17**].

We must never separate God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit, for they are all One God.

Note Jesus said “our” Father, so we need to remember that many other true Christians are praying to the One True God as their Heavenly Father.

God introducing Himself as Father through the personal word of Jesus Christ, also in His prayer before His death on the cross, Jesus Christ used the term “*Abba Father*,” [Mark 14:36].

Paul used this same term in **Romans 8:15**.

“Abba” is a word framed on the lips of infants and expresses unreasoning trust. Father expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship.

The two words together express love and intelligent confidence of the child addressing the Almighty God.

“*In heaven*” – this reminds us that God is no ordinary Father but One who is above all beings in power, sovereignty, holiness and wisdom.

“*Hallowed be Your name*” – **the Greek word translated “hallowed” is “*hagiazō*” meaning a state of holiness, sacred and blameless.** A state that must be venerated as the highest degree of respect and reverence, mixed with awe.

Not a title any human should take, for to be called reverent is a presumptuous sin as stated in **Psalms 19:13**, a great transgression, Hebrew “*peshah*” meaning revolt or rebellion against God.

“*Name*” – Greek word “*onoma*” refers to authority and character.

“*Your Kingdom come*” – **this must be first and foremost in our prayers, thoughts and actions, before any physical need we have.**

We need to be praying daily that Jesus Christ will return to the earth to replace the evil rule of Satan, who is the present “*god*” of this world, [2 Corinthians 4:4].

What is our part in the return of Jesus Christ to this earth?

Ezekiel 9:4 – God will place a protecting mark on the foreheads of all who cry out to Him to intervene in this world on behalf of all the victims of the evil that pervades this society.

Revelation 12:11 [New King James] “*They [Christians – verse 10] overcame him [Satan – verse 9] by the blood of the Lamb [Jesus Christ – John 1:29, 35-36 – preaching the good news of what God has done for all humanity through Jesus Christ, [John 3:16-17]. Also by our personal testimony [Matthew 5:13-16], even to the point of sacrificing our own lives.*”

Romans 12:1 [NIV] “*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.*”

Offer the total of our lives to God for Him to use how He will [“*bodies*” is the Greek word “*soma*” meaning physical body, mind and human spirit – **Job 32:8**].

Romans 12:2 [New King James] “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*”

God will then re-educate our minds in preparation for Him to use as the “*first fruits*” of His Kingdom, [Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; James 1:18].

Seek to think as Jesus Christ thinks

Philippians 2:1-8 [New King James] *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*

A humble mind that seeks to serve other people, [Matthew 20:25-28].

This is how God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

“Give us this day our daily bread” –

The important word in this statement is *“daily”* –

It will help us to honestly only ask for “daily” bread, physically, if we have learnt to be content, [Philippians 4:11-13].

Paul knew that God would provide for all his needs [**Philippians 4:19**]. This mainly refers to our spiritual life.

Philippians 3:10-14 [New King James] *“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

In his spiritual growth Paul knew he should never be content, continually seeking God’s will and the truth.

We do this by daily study and meditation on God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

John 6:51, 63, 66-68 [New King James] *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” ... “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” ... “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”*

The words of Jesus Christ are life-giving, eternal life.

“And forgive us our debts” – the Greek word translated *“debts”* is *“ōphēilēō”* meaning failure in duty, morally or physically, guilty thus indebted to God our Creator, Sustainer and Saviour.

Not honouring our Spiritual Father, and **not** loving our fellow human beings.

“As we forgive our debtors” – **we are under obligation to repay these debts, by extending the love of God in us out to other human beings.**

“Lead us not into temptation” –

James 1:13 [Amplified Bible] *“Let no-one say when he is tempted, I am tempted from God, for God is incapable of being tempted by what is evil and He Himself tempts no-one.”*

The Greek word translated “temptation” is “peirasmōs” meaning being put to the test by a trial, which is not directly referring to sin, but more to a situation that would destroy us instead of disciplining us.

Hebrews 12:5-11 [New King James] *“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”*

God does chasten us but only to help us develop God-like character, [Proverbs 3:11-12].

1 Corinthians 10:13 [New King James] *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

No test that God brings to us will be beyond what He knows we can bear, even if at the time it feels too much for us to cope with.

God knows our mental and physical pain level better than we do!

“But deliver us from the evil one” – referring directly to Satan.

We personally have a part to play in this avoiding the influence of Satan.

James 4:7-8 [New King James] *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”*

Offer our lives to God, [**Romans 12:1**].

Be aware of Satan’s influence in the world’s society, [**1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 11:14-15; 2 Corinthians 4:4**].

Confess our sins to God and seek forgiveness through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, [**1 John 1:8-10**].

Purify our hearts by thinking only what is good and pure, [**Philippians 4:8**].

Avoid being double-minded, the Greek word used is “dipsuchōs” meaning “two-spirited” that is allowing ourselves to be influenced by Satan the spirit ruling this world as well as the Holy Spirit, [Matthew 6:24].

“For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever” –

As we started our prayers with praise and thanksgiving, so we should end in the same way.

This will remind us once again to Whom we are speaking and the character and office of the One and only God who rules over the nations and in Whose hands is the future of all humanity.

“Amen” is a word direct from the Hebrew meaning Jehovah is faithful in Isaiah 65:16 it is literally rendered *“God of the Amen.”*

If God is faithful then all His testimonies and precepts are sure, [**Psalm 19:7; Psalm 111:7**].

As are also all His warnings, [**Hosea 5:9**] and promises, [**Isaiah 33:16; Isaiah 55:3**].

Revelation 3:14 [King James] *“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;”*

Amen is the title given to Jesus Christ.

I hope that the word “Amen” will never be used lightly ever again by any true Christian.