# **Prayer**

#### Introduction

Prayer is the foundation of our Christian lives. Without prayer we could never be in a relationship with God. In fact, without prayer we could never be saved in the first place. Prayer is just a word that we use to describe an activity which is so diverse and multifaceted. Simply put, prayer encompasses all our communication with the Lord. From asking Jesus to be the Lord of our lives at salvation, through to worship and intercession, all these activities are forms of prayer. Hence prayer really is simply, any form of communication between us and the Lord.

On this course you will learn why we should pray, how we should pray, to whom we should pray and most importantly, how to pray effectively and powerfully. Understanding that praise and worship is also a form of prayer, this subject will also be covered as well as the subject of fasting.

This course serves as an outline for the series entitled Prayer which is available off our website at www.bolm.co.za.

## 1. Why Should We Pray?

As a young Christian I often wondered why the Bible placed such a strong emphasis on prayer. In my immaturity I thought that because God is Almighty and Sovereign, He could do what He liked and really did not need my prayers. If it was His desire that all should be saved then why did I need to pray for the unsaved? Surely God could save them without any assistance from me.

Thankfully the Lord gave me insight and revelation into the importance of prayer and specifically why we as Christians should all have a disciplined and effective prayer life. Let us answer this question.

"What is man that You are mindful of him and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet."

Psalms 8:5-6

## Prayer -

### **Course Content**

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"The heaven, even the heavens,	are the Lord's; but the earth He has
given to the children of men."	<b>Psalm 115:16</b>

We know from Scripture that God created man to rule over the earth. In **Genesis 1:27-28** God gave Adam dominion over the earth and over all of His creation. I want to emphasize again that it was God's desire that man should be ruler over earth and all that God created on and in it.

Adam in turn, would walk in a close relationship with God and so he would rule over the earth with God-given wisdom and ability. However, Adam disobeyed God and submitted himself to Satan's influence and thus his authority was then transferred to the Devil. Satan now exercises much of the dominion and the authority that God initially gave to Adam.

Scripture bears witness to this truth.

"Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. "Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Luke 4:5-8

Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world and said that they had been given to him. Who gave them to him? The answer is, Adam!

Therefore Satan has now received legal authority over the peoples and nations of the world through Adam's sin. Adam relinquished his God-given authority to Satan and thus mankind no longer can function as God ordained rulers of earth.

Jesus Himself called Satan "the ruler of this world" in **John 14:30**. In **2 Corinthians 4:4** calls him "the god of this age" and in **1 John 5:19** the Scriptures teach that the whole world (i.e. the unsaved) "lies under the sway of the wicked one."

The good news is that those who are in covenant with God (in the past, the Jews under the Old Covenant and now, Christians under the New Covenant) have the authority to pray that God's will be done on earth (Matthew 6:9-10).

"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one".

Ezekiel 22:30


Under the Old Testament, God sought one man to pray to Him so that His mercy could be poured out on Israel. In like manner God requires His people who are called by His Name to ask Him to intervene in the affairs of this life. If we do not pray then God's will is hindered in being done.

Because Satan is now the god of this age, we must pray against his schemes and wicked desires and ask God to establish His will on the earth (**Matthew 6:10**).

In conclusion, we pray because God in His sovereignty will not in certain instances move on the earth unless His people pray that His will be done on earth as it is done, where He has complete authority, in Heaven.

# 2. To Whom Should We Pray?

Many very sincere Christians pray to Jesus in Jesus name. For example, "Dear Lord Jesus, please give me grace to serve You today in Your Holy Name I pray. Amen."

Although the above prayer is very sincere, it reveals an ignorance of the Word and of what Jesus purchased for the believer.

"...Whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

John 15:16

"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."

Iohn 16:23

Jesus taught His disciples that they must pray to the Father and not to Him. The reason He taught this was because He had come to reconcile man back to God the Father. Through Christ we have been given access to the Father (**Ephesians 2:18**). We must now make request of the Father but it must be through the Name of Jesus because it is only through Jesus that we have access to the Father.

It is important to always remember that Jesus died for us so that we can have a relationship with His Father who has now also become our Father (**John 20:17**).

It is important to note that there are certain events that God has placed in His own hands. These events include the time of Jesus' return, the Millennium Reign of Christ and the re-creation of all things.

These events will come to pass whether we pray for them or not.

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# 3. Different Types of Prayer

As I wrote in the introduction, prayer encompasses all our communication with the Lord. Therefore, just as there are many forms or types of communication so there are many forms of prayer. We will now examine these various types of prayer and how we are to use them.

But before we continue, I want to emphasize that the different types of prayer cannot be separated and be used independently of each other. In reality, they always flow into each other and are very inter-twined.

Please do not fall into the error of trying to pray after a certain pattern or in a particular way. Each person will pray differently. What is important is that we pray effectively, powerfully and by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

"Therefore I exhort first of all that **supplications**, **prayers**, **intercessions** and **giving of thanks** be made for all men."

1 Timothy 2:1

"Be anxious for nothing but in everything by **prayer** and **supplication** with **thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God." **Philippians 4:6** 

### I. Supplication

The word *supplication*, is translated from the Greek word *deēsis*, meaning to make a request or to ask God for something. Supplication is therefore asking God to do <u>something specific</u> either for us or for someone else. However, whatever we ask the Father must be in His will.

#### II. Prayer

"Prayer" comes from the Greek, proseuchē, referring to any form of earnest prayer made to God. This form of prayer differs from "supplication" in that it is not necessarily specific but it is always earnest.

For example, in the above Scripture, Paul encourages that we pray for all men. Now, if I prayed for a particular person and asked God to convict them of their sin so that they would be more attentive to the gospel, that would be a form of *supplication*, as I am making a specific request.

However if I asked the Lord to do whatever it took to bring this person to salvation that would be *prayer* - proseuchē because I am earnestly asking the Lord to intervene, but not with a specific request.

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#### III. Intercession

"Intercession" comes from the Greek word, enteuxis. To make intercession or to intercede means to stand as a mediator for one party before a third party. The best example of this is Jesus who is our mediator or advocate before the Father (1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25). Just as Jesus continually prays for the church, so intercession is to continually bring a request earnestly before God and to continue praying until the prayer is answered.

**Supplications** and **prayers** become **intercession** when they are continually and earnestly brought before the Father in Jesus' name.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this section, the different types of prayer cannot be separated and be used independently of each other. In reality, they always flow into each other and are very intertwined.

#### IV. Thanksgiving

**Thanksgiving** comes from the Greek *eucharistia* meaning to give thanks or show gratitude. Thanksgiving is an expression of our faith in God's willingness and ability to answer prayer that is in accordance with His will. Our prayer life should be infused with thanksgiving not only because we believe God will answer our prayers but because we are grateful to Him for His love, goodness and salvation.

#### V. Prayer - Beseeching

In **Acts 4:24-31** the apostles pray after being threatened not to preach Christ. The word for *prayed* used in verse 31, is the Greek word, *deomai* which means to urgently plead, beseech or beg. In context with the verse, this type of prayer has a great sense of urgency and requires a quick intervention from the Lord.

#### VI. Praying in Tongues

We will not discuss whether praying in tongues is for today or not. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is discussed at length in the Basic Foundations Course.

The Spirit-filled believer has the wonderful privilege of praying in tongues and praying from their spirit which is a very powerful form of prayer.

In **1 Corinthians 14:14-15** Paul says that he "will pray with the spirit and...with the understanding."

He uses the Greek verb *proseuchomai* which describes any form of prayer (the noun) which is being prayed (the verb). I will explain this on the next page. For now, it is important to note

that most forms of prayer can be expressed in either a known language or in a tongue.

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#### VII. Praise and Worship

Because prayer encompasses any form of communication we have with the Lord, praise and worship then becomes very much part of the believers' prayer life.

The final section of the course deals with this most wonderful expression of prayer in more detail.

#### VIII. Intercession by the Holy Spirit

The last type of prayer mentioned in Scripture is the most remarkable and often the most misunderstood.

In Romans 8:26 the apostle Paul writes,

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered"

Many Pentecostal and Charismatic believers confuse the above type of intercession with praying in tongues (Mark 16:17; 1 Corinthians 14:15). However, Paul is quite clear that this form of intercession cannot be verbalised or expressed in any word or utterance.

What he is explaining is a form of intercession that no longer emanates from the person who is praying, either from their soul or their spirit. Instead, the Holy Spirit within their spirit begins to intercede and thus the person is unable to express anything verbally. The only sound that is uttered is, as Paul writes, a groaning because the person is literally unable to say anything. (Those who have experienced this form of prayer will confirm what I have written)

To reiterate, it is the Holy Spirit who is now interceding and not the individual.

This type of intercession is almost always experienced while earnestly and passionately interceding either in a known or an unknown tongue.

### Summary

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

Ephesians 6:18

In the above Scripture, Paul uses the Greek verb *proseuchomai* which we have learnt is a verb which describes any form of prayer (noun) which is being expressed. Therefore when you are worshipping, praising, interceding, making a petition, speaking in tongues etc. you are "proseuchomai-ing" or in English, you are praying!

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What he is teaching, is that we are to use all the forms of prayer, which we have already discussed, when we pray. There are no rules to prayer and there are no formulas except that we must be led by the Holy Spirit when we pray. As I have already said, when you pray you will flow from praise into supplication, into worship, into intercession, praying in your own language then in tongues then back to worship. As long as you are led by the Holy Spirit your prayer life will be dynamic and never structured or routine.

## 4. The Six Foundations of Prayer

For your prayer life to be effective, powerful and dynamic there are six foundations or principles that must be built into your heart and your understanding. It is upon these foundations that your prayer life must be built. Without these foundations your prayers will be ineffective and will always remain unanswered by God.

Let us look at these six foundations which are in no particular order because they are all very important.

#### I. Faith

#### Read Hebrews 11:6 and James 1:5-8

The writer of Hebrews teaches that without faith we can never please God and the James says that without faith we will never receive anything from God. It is because we believe that God is who He says He is and that He will do what He says He will do that we pray in the first place.

**Mark 11:24** teaches that when we pray we must believe that God will answer our prayer.

If you do not believe that God will answer a particular prayer then it is pointless to even pray it, because without faith you will receive nothing from God. Faith is the foundation of our relationship with God, therefore faith must be the foundation of our prayer life.

### II. Pray According to the Word

"If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you." **John15:7** 

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us and if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked Him."

1 John 5:14-15

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These two Scriptures assure us that God will answer our
prayers when our prayers are in agreement with His Word.
There are some Christians who misquote Psalm 37:4 and
believe that God will give them their own desires. But the Bible
teaches that if we abide in Christ and in His Word then our
desires will line up with His heart and His will. Do not go
praying for riches and luxuries when His word teaches us not to
lust after the things of the world (1 John 2:15-17)

Make sure that you spend time reading and understanding the Word so that you can pray for those things that you know are in Gods' will. By praying in line with His Word, you will always be praying in faith (**Romans 10:17**)

#### III. Walking in Obedience (Holiness)

Read Jeremiah 11:10-14B; Proverbs 28:9 and 1 Peter 3:7

The above Scriptures make it very clear that God will not answer our prayers if there is sin, rebellion or disobedience in our lives. Therefore it is important to ask the Lord to reveal any sin in your life that you may quickly repent of it, otherwise your prayer life will be in vain.

"...The prayer of the upright is His delight." **Proverbs 15:8** 

"Beloved if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

1 John 3:21-22

The wonderful assurance we have if we walk in obedience to God is that He will always answer our prayers.

#### IV. Perseverance

Read Isaiah 62:6-7; Luke 11:5-13; Luke 18:1-7

The above three Scriptures all have the same message and that is not to stop praying and asking God until your prayers have been answered.

We must be persistent in our prayer life and not stop praying until we have the answer to our prayers. There is an enemy who resists Gods' will and the heart of man is often in rebellion to God. These two factors require that we persevere in prayer until the Lord breaks through.

Remember, Jesus never taught His disciples to pray once then just confess that they had what they were believing for. That is not biblical theology. We are instructed to persevere in prayer.


#### V. Fervency in Prayer

"Who in the days of His flesh when He had offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death and was heard because of His godly fear."

**Hebrews 5:7** 

Read **Luke 22:41-44** in light of the above Scripture.

Three other synonyms for the word fervent are, passionate, zealous and ardent.

Often when we pray, we are waging war against Satan and his kingdom. War is serious business. It requires commitment and zeal. Now do not confuse zeal with noise and shouting, jumping around and waving flags and banners.

Fervency is an attitude that causes us to become persistent in our prayer life. Fervency causes us to become more sincere in our prayers, more desperate for God to answer. Even Jesus needed to pray more fervently because the overwhelming reality of the crucifixion weighed so heavily upon Him and His prayers had, until then, not given Him the relief that He was desperately crying out for.

#### VI. Forgiveness

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Matthew 6:14-15

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."

Mark 11:25

Without us walking in forgiveness we cannot be forgiven by God. If we are not forgiven then we do not have access to Him through Jesus. If we do not have access then He will not listen to our prayers.

It is vital that the Christian never walks in unforgiveness because not only does this cut us off from the Father but more seriously it separates us from eternal life. We are commanded to forgive those who sin against us and to love and pray for our enemies.


# 5. Prayer and Fasting

"Then the disciples of John came to Him saying, why do we and the Pharisees fast often but your disciples do not fast? And Jesus said to them, can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them and then they will fast."

Matthew 9:14-5

Jesus assured the disciples of John that His followers would fast after He was taken up. However many Christians have never fasted a day in their lives, either, because they were not taught about fasting or do not understand the power of fasting.

Before we continue it is important to note, if you are diabetic or have been advised by a doctor not to fast for health reasons then please do not undertake a fast.

#### Why is Fasting Important?

# i. To break Demonic Strongholds over Individuals.

Read Isaiah 58:6,7-8; Mark 9:14-29

In **Ephesians 6:12**, Paul writes that there are different authorities in the kingdom of darkness. Some of these demons can only be dealt with through prayer and fasting. Prayer with fasting enables God to effectively deal with demonic strongholds that cannot be defeated through prayer alone.

#### ii. To Establish Spiritual Authority

In **2 Corinthians 6:5** and **2 Corinthians 11:27** Paul writes that he fasted often. What was the result of his disciplined prayer life accompanied by fasting? Read **Acts 19:11-16** and pay attention to **verse 15**, *And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know and Paul I know but who are you?* 

Although we have been given authority to cast out demons in the name of Jesus (Mark 16:17 and Luke 11:19) prayer and fasting establishes our authority in the spirit realm. Remember, the disciples who had previously been given authority to cast out demons and did so, could no longer cast them out because they did not continue in prayer and fasting.


iii.	To Establish	God's	Will	Over	<b>Cities</b>	and
	Nations					

Read Daniel 10:1-14 and 2 Chronicles 7:14

In Daniel we read the account of his three week fast. On the first day that he began to pray and fast an angel was sent to bring him a message. Because Satan had authority over the empire of Persia, the demonic spirit who was over the empire resisted the angel. It was because of Daniel's continual prayer and fasting that the will of God prevailed.

Prayer and fasting can influence towns, cities and even nations as demonic hosts are rendered powerless through prayer and fasting. An example of this is the Welsh Revival of 1904 where 100 000 souls were saved in just six months. Pubs closed down, crime came to a halt all because Christians had been seeking God through prayer and fasting.

# iv. To Know Gods Will and Draw Close to Him

Read Isaiah 58:8-9 and Acts 13:2-3

Very often God's will for your own life, your family or your church can only be sought through prayer and fasting. As you humble yourself before God through prayer and by denying your flesh food, He responds by revealing His will to you. A minister who does not fast will never be effective for God.

#### **Our Attitude in Fasting**

Read Isaiah 58:3-5 and Matthew 6:16-18

Fasting is never done to impress anyone, ever! Therefore our attitude and our motive for fasting can only be to draw closer to the Lord and to see His will done either in our lives or in others.

Before we begin a fast we must make sure that our lives are in submission to the Lord. As He says in Isaiah, it is pointless to fast if you mistreat your servants, are full of strife and sin or are planning to spend the time of fasting indulging your flesh. Likewise as Jesus says in Matthew, we are not to make it obvious to others that we are fasting in order to impress them. Fasting must always be between you and the Lord.

Obviously it is necessary to let your spouse know for two reasons. Firstly that you do not upset her when you do not eat the food she has prepared for you (humour?). Secondly, that there be no intimacy whilst you are fasting (1 Corinthians 7:5)


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In the church today there are those who believe that there are various kinds of fasts. For example they believe in a Daniel Fast (**Daniel 1:8-21**) which is abstaining from all foods except fruit and vegetables. However, if you read the account carefully you will notice that Daniel refused to eat unclean meat and food offered to idols. He was not fasting, but obeying the Law of Moses.

The truth is that there are only two kinds of fasts in the Bible. The first is abstaining from all food but drink only water. And the second is abstaining from both food and water. It is highly recommended that you do not abstain from water for more than 24 hours.

To abstain from food but drink tea, coffee, soup or fruit juice defeats the whole purpose of fasting because these beverages either nourish or stimulate the physical body which is exactly what fasting seeks not to do.

The following are the most common fasts mentioned in the Bible.

#### 1 Day Fast

This is the most common type of fast found in Scripture. A one day fast every week, every second week or once a month should become part of the Christian's life, should they wish to be used effectively for the Lord.

We are not under law to fast so do not become rigid and legalistic about it. Fasting is an expression of our love and desire to draw closer to the Lord and must never become a burden.

#### 3 Day Fast

Used by Paul after his conversion in **Acts 9:9**. The reason for him choosing to fast three days was probably because of his understanding of Old Testament consecration (**Exodus 19:10-11**; **Joshua 1:11**; **Ester 4:16** and **1 Samuel 21:5**). A three day fast is usually sufficient in light of the Old Testament pattern of consecration.

#### **40 Day Fast**

The Bible records that only three men have ever undertaken a forty day fast. The first was Moses who did it twice but he spent that time in the presence of God (**Exodus 34:28**).

The second was Elijah who was given special food by an angel (1 Kings 19:5-8) and the third was Jesus.

Unless God calls you into His manifest presence or an angel


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Fasting is not about how long but about drawing close and hearing from the Lord. Do not fall into pride and sin because you want to fast longer than someone else.

Fasting is always between you and the Lord.

## 6. Praise and Worship

"But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth."

John 4:23-24

Worship is not a formula and worship is not reached through praise. Worship is the natural expression of our love for God. The Father is looking for those who would worship Him in their spirits and not in their flesh. In the truth of what Jesus has purchased for us and not in the shadows of the Law.

There are many teachings about praise and worship being likened to the Tabernacle or the Temple in the Old Testament. But we are no longer under the Old Covenant. Under the Old Covenant only the high priest could go behind the veil into the presence of God and then, only once a year.

However under the New Covenant, all who are born again can come at any time into the presence of the Father and worship and fellowship with Him.

#### Why Should we Worship God?

"Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified."

Psalm 40:16

We worship God because we have experienced His amazing love and salvation. Jesus said that whoever is forgiven much, loves much (**Luke 7:47**). As the psalmist writes, let those who love God's salvation continually magnify God.

We can only truly worship God if we truly love Him. And we can only love Him if we know Him. We can only know Him if we spend time with Him. And we can only spend time with Him through prayer and worship.


### When Should we Worship?

"Rejoice in the Lord always and again I will say rejoice."

Philippians 4:4

"I will praise the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." Psalm 34:1

Worship is a form of prayer, therefore we should worship whenever we can. When you were young and in love did you ever stop talking about the person you loved? Did you ever stop telling people how wonderful that person you loved was? Why should it be any different with the Lord?

If you find it hard to worship the Lord, then you must question where you are spiritually. Those who love the Lord delight in worshipping Him.

#### The House of the Lord, the Place of Worship

"You also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 2:5

Many in the church refer to the church building as the "house of the Lord". Nothing could be further from the truth. God does not live in buildings made by man, He lives in the hearts of His people. Peter reminds us that we who are born again are the living stones that God uses to build His spiritual house which is the church. Not bricks and mortar but believers who are called to offer up spiritual sacrifices which is genuine worship.

#### The Priests of God, the True Worshippers

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

1 Peter 2:9

How many times have you heard a preacher being introduced as "the man of God." Although we are under the New Covenant, most Christians believe that only some are called and anointed by God. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every born again believer is a priest of God, is a chosen son or daughter, part of a royal and holy nation. Yes, you are a priest of God and you have been called to proclaim His praises.

It is not the worship team's job to make you praise and worship God. Each of us must become worshippers because God is seeking those who would worship Him in spirit and truth.

Worship is the most intimate form of prayer.

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