

Prayer

Prayer = A unique form of two-way conversation between God and man lasting as long as life last.

God created man and redeemed him for fellowship with Himself. That is what prayer is. God speaks to us in, and through the contents in the Bible which is His word, and then the Holy Spirit opens up this word and applies it to us so we can understand. In return we speak to God about Himself, ourselves and others in the world shaping what we say in response to what He has said.

Gen. Robert E. Lee wrote:

Knowing that intercessory prayer is our mightiest weapon and supreme call for Christians today, I pleadingly urge our people everywhere to pray... Let there be prayer at sunup, at noonday, at sundown, at midnight, all through the day. Let us pray for our children our youth, our aged, our pastors, our homes. Let us pray for our churches.

Let us pray for ourselves, that we may not lose the word "concern" for those who have never known Jesus Christ and redeeming love, for moral forces everywhere, for national leaders. Let prayer be our passion. Let prayer be our practice.

The Bible teaches and pronounces that prayer is a fourfold activity, to be performed by God's people individually both in private (matt. 6:5-8) and in company with each other (Acts 1:14;4:24). **Adoration and praise, confession of sin and forgiveness sought, thanks for blessings received, and petitions and supplications for ourselves and others are sought.** The Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) contains Adoration, petition, and confession; the psalms contains all four elements of prayer.

Commander Stonewall Jackson wrote:

When we take our meals, there is grace. When I take a draught of water, I always pause... to lift up to God my heart in thanks and prayer for the water of life...

when I break the seal of a letter just received, I stop to pray to God that He may prepare me for its contents and make it a messenger of good. When I go to my classroom and await the arrangement of the cadets in their places, that is my time to intercede with God for them.

Petition, in which the person is praying humbly to acknowledge their need and express themselves as trustfully depending on God to meet it out of His sovereign resources, wisdom and goodness is the form of prayer that most often is highlighted in the Bible;

Gen. 18:16-33, Exod. 32:31-33:17, Ezra. 9:5-15

Neh. 1:5-11; 4:4-5, 9; 6:9, 14, Dan. 9:4-19, James 5:16-18

Matt. 7:7-11, John 16:23-24, Eph. 6:18-20, 1 John 5:14-16

Biblically speaking, petition prayers are directed to the Father and Christ is called upon for salvation and healing matters as in the days he walked among us (Rom. 10:8-13; Cor. 12:7-9) and the Holy Spirit for grace and peace (Rev. 1:4). It cannot be wrong to present petitions to God as triune or to request any spiritual from any one of the three Persons, but there must be wisdom in following the New Testament pattern.

Jesus teaches that petition to the Father are to be made in His name (**John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24**) We can only look to Jesus for support when we ask according to God's will (**1 John 5:14**) and our motivation for asking is right (**James 4:3**).

Jesus says that we may properly persist God in our petition (**Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8**) and He will answer such prayer in positive terms according to His will. God always knows what is best for us in a way that we do not know. If God answers a prayer in a manner that we did not request or even know, it is because He had something better to give than we asked for. Paul prayed that God would remove the thorn in his flesh (**2 Cor. 12:7-9**). Therefore saying to God "Your will be done," surrenders our preference to the Father's wisdom as Jesus did in Gethsemane (**Matt. 26:39-44**).

The efficacy of prayer is not inconsistent in the teaching of scripture concerning God's foreordination of all things. God ordains the means as well as the end. The mysterious reality of the Holy Spirit's help in prayer becomes known only to those who actually pray.

Dr James Kennedy stated:

In reading over the Constitutions of all fifty of our states, I discovered... there is in all fifty, without exception, an appeal or a prayer to the Almighty God of the universe... Through all fifty state Constitutions, without exception, there runs this same appeal and reference to God Who is the Creator of our liberties and the Preserver of our Freedoms.

"We give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty..." Rev. 11:17

****Most of the foregoing material was taken from "Concise Theology" by J.I. Packer*