

Prayer and the Devotional Life: Strategies to Keep You Going

Luke 18:1 "And He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart."

I. Misconceptions?

"Prayer changes things"

"Say a little prayer for me"

"There is power in prayer"

"Faith can move mountains."

What is prayer?

Conversation with God

II. Practical daily approach.

A. Quiet Time/Personal Devotion/Personal Prayer Time/Prayer Closet

A time set aside to meet with God through His Word and prayer.

An effective Quiet Time is one that helps you:

1. get to know God more intimately
2. have fellowship with Jesus
3. walk in the Spirit

B. Key Ingredients:

1. Desire for God—Psa.63:1
2. Love for God—John 14:21
3. Reverence for God—Psa. 25:14

C. Quiet Time: the Basics

1. Read the Word. Pray Psalm 119:18 "Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Your law."
2. Pray about what you read. Psalm 119:34 "Give me understanding that I may observe Your law, and keep it with all my heart."
3. Seek to apply: Psalm 119:133 "Order my steps in Your Word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."
 - Sin to avoid or forsake?
 - Example to follow?
 - Promise to claim?
 - Command to follow?
 - New thought about God?
4. Journal/diary. Notebook.

III. Hints/helps:

1. Make an appointment. Set a time and place.
2. Have a plan
3. Be flexible—allow variety
4. Be accountable
5. Aim for consistency. (Start small. Do what you *can* do. Build the habit first. You can expand it later.)

IV. Hindrances:

1. Unconfessed sins. Repent/turn around. Psa.66:18
2. Busyness. Must make knowing God a priority.
3. Cares. Worry. Mind wandering
 - a. Pray over them.
 - b. Keep a pocket diary or do list on hand. Write them down so you can work on them later. Then you won't have to be concerned about forgetting.
 - c. Start reading the Bible or prayer guide. Get your mind engaged.
4. Drowsiness.
 - a. Go to bed on time. "You can't soar with the eagles in the morning if you hoot with the owls all night."
 - b. Walk around
 - c. Pray out loud.
5. Distractions. (eyes, ears, discomfort..) Find a quiet place, plain desk or table. Put aside magazines, newspaper, TV, books, pictures.....etc. "out of sight out of mind".
6. Emotions. "I don't feel like praying, or reading the Bible." Start. Just do it. The feelings may follow. Be persistent during the dry times.

V. Tools to get started:

Bible, notebook, pen/pencil.
 "7 Minutes with God", NavPress
My Heart Christ's Home, Munger
Quiet Time, IVP

VI. Tools to keep going:

A. The Word

1. Bible reading calendar. This will enable you to read through the Bible in 1 or 2 years, and then continue rereading. (e.g. "Australian plan")
2. Try reading a different version occasionally. There are several different English translations and paraphrases. For those in cross-cultural situations, reading the Bible in a different language will also produce a different light on Scripture meaning.
3. Supplement Bible reading with meaningful devotional books. (Be mindful of not replacing the Word with books *about* the Word.)

My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers
My Heart Christ's Home, Munger
Praying God's Word, (Beth Moore)

B. Prayer: ACTS I

1. Adoration

31 Days of Praise

Attributes of God

Praying Scripture, Beth Moore

Hymn Book

Names of God

Miracles of Jesus

2. Confession

a. Sins of the tongue

b. Sins of action

c. Sins of omission

d. Sins of the heart. Thought patterns. Wrong desires. "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." II Cor.10:3-5

e. Strongholds. "...for a man is a slave to whatever overpowers him."

II Pet.2:19 (see Neil Anderson's book and study, The Bondage Breaker)

You may want to recruit a prayer partner to deal with these strongholds.

3. Thanksgiving

At least be polite, and say, "Thank You."

Prayer request journal. Testimony, milestones.

Thank Him for specific things:

--Material blessings: (home, transportation, shoes, heat, water, etc.)

--Physical blessings: (mind, eyes, health, hands, etc.)

--People: spouse, children, pastor, teacher, doctor, mailman, plumber, mechanic, hairdresser, etc.

--Spiritual blessings: (salvation, answered prayer, mentors, the Word, etc.)

4. Supplication:

Asking God for supplies. Asking for yourself.

"Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find;
knock and it will be opened to you." Matt.7:7,8

What do you need today?

What are you worrying about?

What is getting the most of your thought time?

May want to keep a prayer request journal.

5. Intercession:

Interceding. Asking for others.

Prayer lists:

Spouse and children.

Family.

Personal ministry. Evangelism prayer list.

Missionary/ministry prayer letters. (email requests)

Other leaders, e.g. government, church staff.

(prayer lists, cont'd)

Neighbors...your circle of influence. (gas station, school, coworkers, etc.)

Prayer partners.

Spiritual warfare.

Helpful resources:

How to Spend a Day in Prayer, Lorne Sanny

Miracles of Jesus (Ryrie study Bible)

Praying for Children/For My Wife

Spiritual Warfare Prayer

WebServant@imb.org

Spiritual Warfare Prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I bring before you in prayer _____. I ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance that I might pray in the Spirit as You have told me. I thank You, Heavenly Father, that You have sovereign control over _____. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and as a priest of God, I ask for mercy and forgiveness for the sins of _____ by which he has grieved You. I plead the sufficiency of the blood of Christ to meet the full penalty his sins deserve. In Jesus I claim back the ground of his life which he has given to Satan by believing the enemy's deception. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I pray all of Satan's activity to hold _____ in blindness and darkness would be restricted. Exercising my authority which is given to me in my union with the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray Jesus would pull down the strongholds which the kingdom of darkness has formed against _____. Jesus, smash and break and destroy all those plans formed against _____'s mind, his will, his emotions, and his body. Jesus, destroy the spiritual blindness and deafness that Satan keeps upon him. I invite the Holy Spirit of God to bring the fullness of His power to convict, to bring to repentance, and to lead _____ into faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, cover him with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and break Satan's power to blind him to the truth of God. Believing that Your Holy Spirit is leading me, I claim _____ for You in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I thank You for the answer to my prayer. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I joyfully lay this prayer before You in the worthiness of His completed work. Amen.

PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

"Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments! His descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed." Psa. 112:1-2

"May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars cut for the structure of a palace." Psa. 144:12

"And all things whatsoever you ask in prayer believing, you shall receive." Matt. 21:22

I want my children to grow up to be like Jesus, so I want them to grow like He grew... "in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God and men." Luke 2:42

1. In wisdom: intellect & righteousness

- a. That my children develop keenness of mind and clarity of thinking (Matt. 10:16 wise as serpents and harmless as doves.)
- b. That the Lord would guard their minds from Satanic, worldly, and carnal influences. (II Cor. 11:3)
- c. That they have a heart to learn from their parents, that they be teachable (Eph. 6:4)
- d. Purity of heart and mind, to be filled with righteousness & moral purity (Prov. 22:11)

2. In Stature: physically

- a. That they be safe from evil & tragedy, and from godless people whom God has turned over to a reprobate mind. (Psa. 138:7; 34:7)
- b. That they be strong & in good health. (Pr. 4:22)
- c. That they gain Godly stature & be mighty of spirit. (I Sam. 10:26 "men of valor whose hearts God had touched")
- d. That God would enrich their lives with quality & memorable experiences (Pr. 3:1, 2LB)

3. *In favor with God: spiritually*

- a. That Christ be Lord of their life (Lu.14:26,30)
- b. That God give them a hunger for His Word (I Pet.2:2)
- c. That God fill their hearts with zeal for Christ and His kingdom. (John 2:17)
- d. That they be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:18)
- e. Heart for God (Aperfect heart) I Chron.29:18,19; I Kings 3:9,10
4. In favor with man: socially
 - a. That they have gracious speech (Col.4:6)
 - b. That they develop a love for righteousness & moral purity. (I John 2:15,16)
 - c. That they develop an attractive lifestyle based on principles of Scripture:

Faithful	Prov.20:6
Loyal	Prov.3:4
Skillful	Prov.22:29
Resourceful	Psa.1:3
Hard working	Ecl.9:10; Col.3:23
Reliable & honest	Lu.8:15; Titus 3:1
Of good repute	Prov.22:1
Kindness	Prov.19:22LB
Good manners	Eccles.8:5
 - d. That they learn to appreciate correction, reproof, and wisdom (Prov.9:9; Prov.12:1)
 - e. Lead many to Christ (Dan.12:3)
 - f. Ability to make right friendships. Prov.18:24
 - g. Comfortable and sure-footed with their manhood. I Cor.16:13,14

PRAYING FOR SONS (IN LAW)

1. Leadership. God, develop leadership in his life by giving: clear vision of Your will based on Your Word. Qualities: honesty, faithfulness, servant heart, generosity, humility, loyalty, courage, compassion, skillfulness.
2. Holy life above reproach. (I Tim.3:2)

3. A Godly wife (Pr.19:14 Hard to find; why I should pray for)
4. Knit my heart to his for life. (I Sam.18:1)

PRAYING FOR DAUGHTERS (IN LAW)

1. Sensible, chaste, domestic, kind & submissive (Tit.2:5)
2. Imperishable jewel of a gentle & quiet spirit (I Pet.3:4,6)
Remove her fears & replace them with quiet confidence (Prov.3:5)
3. Security...in Christ: His protection, provision, & completeness (John 10:28; Heb.11:6)
4. A Godly husband: my son (Jer.3:15 shepherd's heart)
5. God knit her heart to mine as a second father (I Sam.18:1)
6. Her parents. Their own faith, and Godly example.

FOR MY WIFE

1. Let nothing terrify her. (I Pet.3:6)
2. Let her smile at the future (Prov.31:25)
3. Let her have public recognition for her excellent work (Prov.31:28-31)
4. Give her opportunity to teach younger women (Titus 2:3-5; Prov.31:26)
5. Give her success in creative family business ventures (Prov.31:16,18, 24)
6. Give her physical health & strength (Prov.31:17)
7. Give her success in shopping (clothes, groceries)(Prov.31:21,22,27)
8. Give her a husband she is proud of (Prov.31:23)
9. That I demonstrate whole-hearted trust in her (Prov.31:11)
10. Let her hands find fulfilling things to do (Prov.31:13, 19)
11. Protect her from temptation to idleness & gossip (Prov.31:15, 27; I Tim.5:13)
12. Give her resources and opportunity to help those in need. (Prov.31:20)
13. Nice-looking wardrobe (Prov.31:22)