



PRAYER THAT WORKS

7 BIBLE STUDIES PREPARED BY
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Prayer That Works

7 Studies on the subject of Prayer, prepared by Dr Andrew Corbett, the pastor of Legana Christian Church, in Tasmania, Australia.

The goal of this set of Bible Studies is to provide a Biblical grounding for prayer that will provide a sound theological basis for praying appropriately which will also inspire the believer to more apt to pray.

At the conclusion of each Bible Study lesson there is a series of challenges that are designed to help you to put into practice what we have just studied.

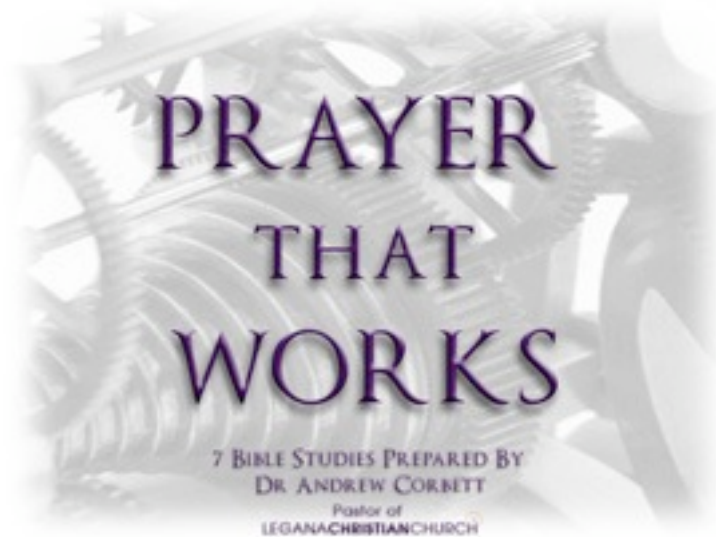
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Prayer That Works



Study #	Topic
1	Praying Privately- -What is prayer? -Singing-Reading-Writing-Reciting-Spontaneous -What praying does for God -How our prayers glorify God
2	Praying For Others- -The privilege and responsibility of prayer -What affect our prayer has on others -About Intercession -Why prayer is necessary for people to be saved
3	Praying In The Spirit- -What difference the Baptism with the Holy Spirit makes -Praying as led by the Spirit -Praying for the gifts of the Spirit -
4	Praying Scripture- -Prayerfully approaching Scripture -Praying the prayers of Scripture -Praying what we read -Shaping the way you pray through Scripture

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Study #	Topic
5	Praying Publicly <ul style="list-style-type: none">-What to pray for in public-How to inspire people with your prayer-Considered praying-Ways not to pray in public
6	Model Praying <ul style="list-style-type: none">-The prayer Jesus gave-A.C.T.S.-The benefits of pattern praying-Keeping a prayer list
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Study 1

OUTLINE

- What is prayer?
- Singing-Reading-Writing-Reciting-Spontaneous praying
- What praying does for God
- How our prayers glorify God

WHAT IS PRAYER?

In its simplest sense, prayer is talking to God. But pondering prayer a little deeper, prayer is actually conversing with God. As we study what the Scriptures teach about prayer, we will see that prayer is not just *speaking* but *listening*.

1. Genesis 20:7 is the first time that prayer is mentioned in Scripture. What do we learn from this text? What do you find curious about what God said in this text? (Note Genesis 20:17)

2. What did Isaac know in order for him to do what he did in Genesis 25:21?

Praying Privately

From the earliest times it appears that people had the idea that they could seek God in prayer to meet their needs. Scripture reveals that this was done simply and privately. As people learned more about God and how to approach Him, prayer evolved from merely a private matter to become ultimately a corporate (many people together) exercise in the New Testament.

3. Do you know what you would like God to do for you? That is, what are you praying for regularly? Can you share one of those requests?

4. Read the episode of someone praying in First Samuel 1:9-18. What is perhaps unusual about this woman's prayer?

Private prayer should be an act of worship- something we do to further our surrender to God. It is also the most appropriate means to bring our deepest requests before God. But what it isn't is an opportunity to be seen by others in order to impress them with your spirituality (note Matt. 6:6). Praying privately is not for super-Christians, it's for all Christians. Will you take time to pray privately?

5. Observe what Jesus was doing in Luke 6:12. Why did He do this?

When we pray privately, there is no right way to pray. That is, there are no magic words to utter, no mystical phrases that must be cited, or no sacred expressions to be repeated.

SINGING-READING-WRITING- RECITING-SPONTANEOUS PRAYING

Perhaps the most common type of private praying is the whispered or mental prayer. But prayers do not have to be spoken.

6. Consider the Book of Psalms. Randomly select a Psalm. Discuss whether this Psalm is a "private" prayer and whether it was meant to be prayed by the reader. Give reasons-

The Book of Psalms is generally considered to be a collection of prayers to be sung. Singing prayers is a legitimate way to pray. Singing prayers engages the pray-er's heart and mind. It also helps the pray-er to recall God's faithfulness and presence at those times when praying is difficult. The next time you find it hard to pray and you're alone, try singing your prayers.

I was speaking with someone recently who told me that they weren't particularly emotional. As such, they found it easier to pray by reading the prepared prayers of others. In particular they found the Anglican Common Book of Prayer very helpful for their prayer life. The next time your heart is dull toward prayer, try reading some classic prayers.

Another great way to pray is by writing. Some refer to this type of prayer as "Prayer-Journaling". Christian Bookstores sell blank Prayer-Journals but your local stationery store sells blank exercise books which can serve the same purpose for a fraction of the cost of a printed Prayer-Journal. The next time you find it difficult to speak your prayers, try writing a daily prayer down in a Prayer-Journal.

Praying Privately

7. Some people regard reading the prayers of others as insincere. What do you think?

Writing your prayers down also has the added benefit of having a record to which you can refer back to when your prayer is answered.

8. Some scholars regard Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians as a written prayer. Can you see why they might think that? Could you give an example of what Paul prayed for for the Ephesians?

Some believers have found great comfort and strength from reciting prayers. Repeating prayers is however seen by some as pointless because God doesn't forget what we pray so why keep praying the same thing?

9. Read Matthew 26:40-44. What do we learn about praying from the Master of Prayer in this passage?

Some of the prayers of famous past Christians have been recited by other Christians down through the centuries. Do you know of any of these type of prayers? As a young boy I grew up in a family where at meal time we prayed the same prayer each time-

*Thank You Lord for the world so sweet
Thank You Lord for the food we eat
Thank You Lord for the birds that sing
Thank You Lord for everything.*

Praying Privately

While there is great benefit to be gained from praying prepared prayers, there is the need for each of us to develop spontaneous prayers.

10. Consider the prayer of Nehemiah 1:4-11. Do you think this prayer was spontaneous? Did Nehemiah intend for this to be a private prayer?

11. How is this prayer of Nehemiah (1:4-11) different to his prayer in Nehemiah 2:4?

When praying privately you have the wonderful privilege of being able to pray unscripted, spontaneous prayers. You can pray at any time, from your heart, using words that you might not otherwise use in public because they are too personal. Spontaneous prayers don't have to be long. These spontaneous prayers might be just two words! (Like, "God, help!")

WHAT PRAYING DOES FOR GOD

12. What does First Peter 3:12 tell us about God's response to His people praying?

Several times in Scripture God is described as being enveloped in clouds of glory. One contribution of the source of these glory clouds in Revelation 5:8.

13. Read Revelation 5:8 and discuss what this source of glory is.

Praying Privately

14. How does Mark 11:24 encourage us in prayer? (Matt. 21:22)

When we pray and God answers, God is glorified! Far from being a selfish thing to present our petitions to God, it is ultimately a God glorifying act to pray. If God chooses to grant our request it also brings glory to Him. Therefore, we should be pray-ers who live to give God glory and especially pray that He will be glorified in our lives.

15. In what way does praying affect our eternal condition-

By praying for our bills to be paid we are paying our eternal debts to be cleared.

If we pray for God to change our character and to help us to become like Christ.

If we pray for others to be blessed God will surely bless us for eternity.

By praying for souls to be saved we will be given bigger mansions in heaven.

16. According to Romans 12:12 how much time should a growing believer be devoting to prayer everyday?

Your homework for our next Bible study meeting is to do the following-

1. Pray daily for the needs of those in your Bible Study Group (you'll need to note what those needs are)
2. Write a "Life Prayer" for yourself that you can share with the group.
3. Find a classic prayer that you can relate to and share it with the group (see if you can also get the story behind the prayer as well)

Amen.



PRAYER THAT WORKS

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Study 2

OUTLINE

- Follow through on the homework from the last study
- The privilege and responsibility of prayer
- What affect our prayer has on others
- About Intercession
- Why prayer is necessary for people to be saved

THE PRIVILEGE & RESPONSIBILITY OF PRAYER?

"Why pray?" asked the talkback caller to the Christian radio program, "After all, God has ordained everything anyway." The host of the radio program gave a concise yet accurate answer- "We should pray because God commands us to do so." He's right of course and in this way prayer is a responsibility, yet prayer is not *just* an act of obedience. God invites us to pray. He invites us to influence the course of world history and the condition of individual human hearts through prayer.

1. How do know that the Prophet Samuel regarded prayer as a responsibility based on First Samuel 12:23?

Notice how Hebrews 4:16 tells us to approach God in prayer.

Praying For Others

2. Should we regard First Timothy 2:8 as a command (for all believers)?
-

3. Is Second Corinthians 1:11 portraying prayer as a responsibility (command) or a privilege?
-

There is a great mystery about prayer. The mystery might be considered as -

God ordains everything.

We are able to change things by prayer.

When we pray, are we changing the plan of God?

Scripture seems to present God's ordained plan as being outworked and furthered by the prayers of His people.

4. How does Colossians 4:3 show us that it is probable that Paul thought this way about prayer?
-

Why would the Apostle Paul make the request found in First Thessalonians 5:25 unless he believed that it would make a difference?

Many believers have come to realise that praying for others, even in the midst of their own challenges, has fostered spiritual maturity in them.

WHAT AFFECT OUR PRAYER HAS ON OTHERS

If our prayers had no affect on others then it's reasonable to think that Jesus would never had instructed His followers to do so, or even modelled its practise. Some people believe that God can not change a person's heart - a person must be willing to change before they can be changed.

Praying For Others

5. Note who Jesus said His followers should pray for?

Matthew 5:44

Luke 6:28

6. Note who Jesus prayed for in these references-

Luke 22:32

John 17:9

Jesus seemed to think that prayer could spiritually strengthen people, convict people, restore people, and bless people. Praying for others can at least achieve these things. The Apostle Paul thought that when people prayed for him doors of effective opportunity could open for him to preach the Gospel. He also thought that when people prayed for him, it could encourage and strengthen him. By the way he prayed for the Ephesian church it is apparent that he believed that praying for believers could result in them receiving deeper insight into God and His Word (refer to Eph. 1:18).

7. Discuss answers to prayer for yourself or others that you are aware of.

8. The early Church faced a huge problem in Acts 12. What was it? How did they react to this problem? What was the result?

Note the type of praying recommended in James 5:16.

ABOUT INTERCESSION

To *intercede* is to *intervene*. In a prayer sense, to intercede is simply to pray for others *intently*. When fellowshiping with your Bible Study group, listen closely for what needs others in your group have that you can intercede for.

9. Consider First Timothy 2:1. What is being commanded? What is the goal of this command (read the context of this verse).
-

The Holy Spirit is an intercessor (Romans 8:26-27) and so is Christ (Isaiah 53:12; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). What greater modeling of effective prayer can the believer have?

Interceding involves constant prayer on behalf of another. It is more deliberate, persistent and focussed than ordinary prayer. Some people feel particularly called to commit their lives to the ministry of intercession. Only eternity will finally reveal what a vital role they might have played in shaping events, individuals and nations.

10. Sometimes there is a physical sensation when the Holy Spirit uses us to intercede for others. What does Romans 8:26 seem to suggest might accompany Spirit-led intercession for others?
-

11. What did the prophet say that God would wonder about as recorded in Isaiah 59:16?
-

Who can you pray for more intently? Who can you pray for regularly? Down through the centuries, great Christian pray-ers have often kept Prayer-Lists with the names of people they are praying for. Do you have such a prayer-list?

11. What type of praying does First Thessalonians 5:17 call for?
-

We should intercede for the lost to come to know Christ. There will be times also when we should intercede for our Church. If you are ever uncertain which one to do, do both.

WHY PRAYER IS NEEDED FOR PEOPLE TO BE SAVED

We pray for people to be saved. But why? If, as some people believe, not even God can change a heart, what is the point to praying to God to change someone's heart toward salvation in Christ?

12. In Jeremiah 24:7 God foretells that His people will one turn to Him with a new heart. We suspect that this is a prophecy about the coming New Covenant. But why does God have confidence that this happen?
-

Jeremiah's contemporary, Ezekiel, also prophesied about the coming New Covenant. In Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:26 he announces that God will do something extraordinary. If we realise that God can actually do this, it should affect both our confidence and approach in prayer.

13. Discuss what Paul is actually requesting in Colossians 4:3 and Second Thessalonians 3:1-
-

14. What does Acts 14:27 teach us about what God can do in a person's heart?
-








Praying For Others

Someone has used military terms to describe the relationship between prayer and evangelism. He said that prayer is like “air cover” while preaching is like “ground cover”. One without the other makes the other less effective (note Acts 6:4).

15. Perhaps we should pray what Paul prayed for Philemon in Philemon 6? What difference do you think this type of praying might make for our church?
-

16. Ponder Romans 10:1. Paul believes something about what prayer can achieve. Read on Romans 10 and discuss what Paul goes on to say is necessary for this Romans 10:1 prayer to be answered.
-

We can pray -

-  *For God to open people’s hearts toward the Gospel.*
-  *That God reveals to a person their true spiritual condition.*
-  *For a person to hear the Gospel (Romans 10:9-17).*
-  *For a believer to be an effective and fruitful witness (Philemon 6).*
-  *That a person may be given the gift of faith and the gift of repentance (Acts 11:18).*
-  *For God to confirm His Word with signs and wonders (Hebrew 2:4).*
-  *For preachers to be clear, bold and compassionate in their preaching of the Gospel.*

Your homework for our next Bible study meeting is to do the following-

1. Continue to pray daily for the needs of those in your Bible Study Group (you’ll need to note what those needs are)
2. Write a “Prayer List” of people you know who do not yet know Christ and pray regularly this week for these people.
3. Pray for those in your Bible study group to be more effective in their evangelism.

Amen.



PRAYER THAT WORKS

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

Study 3

OUTLINE

- Follow through on the homework from the last study
- What a difference the Baptism with the Holy Spirit makes
- Praying as led by the Spirit
- Praying for the gifts of the Spirit

WHAT A DIFFERENCE THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES

It was the 1870s. Dwight L. Moody, of Chicago, had a passion for souls. He was a good evangelist. But something was missing and he knew it. His spiritual condition was not particularly comforted by two ladies in his church who would say to him after each time he preached, "*Mr Moody, you need the Holy Spirit!*" He had dismissed these comments as being the ranting of two crackpot women. But then the tragic Chicago fires happened and it drove Dwight Moody to his knees seeking God for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. After crying out to God he received what he was praying for. The immediate result was that Dwight L. Moody went from being a good evangelist to becoming a *great* evangelist. This kind of story is repeated many times over down through the centuries in such men

Praying In The Spirit

as Savonarola, Count Nicolas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf, John Wesley, R.T. Kendall.

1. Read John 16:7-14 and note at least 5 things Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do *in* the believer-

Some people think of the Holy Spirit as merely an energy force, but the Holy Spirit is a person. He demonstrates all the attributes of a person.

2. Match the following Scriptures with the personality traits of the Holy Spirit-

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| __ 1Cor. 2:11 | a. He speaks |
| __ Eph. 4:30 | b. He thinks |
| __ 1Tim. 4:1 | c. He can be lied to |
| __ Acts 5:3 | d. He feels |

But He is not merely a person, He is God. We know this because the Bible says He possesses all of the unique qualities of God- He is *eternal* (Hebrews 9:14), He is the *Creator* (Job 33:4), He is *omnipresent* (Psalm 139:7) and He is *all-knowing* (1Cor. 2:11).

When a person is baptised with the Holy Spirit, they are not merely receiving spiritual "power", they are receiving a Person.

Praying In The Spirit

Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they had received the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:6-8). Today, when a person gives their life to Christ this has happened because the Holy Spirit was already active in their life.

3. What do you think the Holy Spirit does in a person in order to bring them to Christ? (Note John 6:44 and 16:8)

4. What does the Holy Spirit do in a person once they accept Christ? (1Cor. 6:11)

It is just not possible to be a Christian without a work of the Holy Spirit taking place in your life! Upon surrendering to the Holy Spirit, He -

- ✿ **fills** your dead spirit (Rom. 8:9) and **quickens** it back to life (Eph. 2:1-5),
- ✿ **cleanses** your impure soul (Titus 3:5),
- ✿ **baptises** you into the body of Christ (1Cor. 12:13),
- ✿ **circumcises** our hard hearts (Rom. 2:29),
- ✿ causes us to abound in **hope** (Rom. 15:13),
- ✿ helps us to **understand** God (1Cor. 2:12),
- ✿ gives an appropriate **gift** to you (1Cor. 12:11),
- ✿ **places** you into a **church** community (Eph. 2:22),
- ✿ enables us to truly **worship** God (Phil. 3:3)
- ✿ is the One whom Christ **baptises** believers who seek with (Mat. 3:11; Luke 11:13; Acts 1:5; 11:16)

Praying In The Spirit

While every believer has had a work of the Spirit in them in order to make them a born-again child of God, not all believers continue to be open to what the Holy Spirit wants to do in their life.

5. Why do you think some believers are reluctant to allow the Holy Spirit to do more in their lives?
-

TONGUES

It appears from Scripture that there are two very distinct kinds of tongues. Firstly, there is *praying* in tongues ("speaking to God", 1Cor. 14:2) and then secondly, there is *prophesying* in tongues (also referred to as "speaking in tongues" 1Cor. 14:13, 27).

6. What did the Apostle Paul want for all believers according to First Corinthians 14:5?
-

It seems that when a believer prays in tongues they are praying mysteriously with the Holy Spirit's help.

7. According to Romans 8:26 how does the Holy Spirit help the believer to pray?
-

If you have not received the Baptism with the Holy Spirit consider making this point of prayer. If you have been seeking this Baptism with the Holy Spirit for some time, consider the following-

1. You may have already received it but not yet spoken in tongues. (If you suspect that this is where you are at, then proceed to 3.)

Praying In The Spirit

2. You may have not been earnest and persistent seeking the Lord for it. (If you suspect that this is where you are at, proceed to 4.)
3. Consider that speaking in tongues as a prayer-language requires a step of faith since it is an unlearned language. Because in one probable instance, Scripture (Romans 8:26) refers to the sound of tongues as “groans” we can see that tongues will not always sound like a language to us. Therefore, the next time you are spending time with the Lord in prayer, let go, forget yourself, and allow the Holy Spirit to pray through you.
4. Keep seeking God for the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and in the meantime be open to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYING AS LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

God has ordained that we pray. In a mysterious way, God has chosen to govern the world and intervene into the events of human lives in response to prayer! But it seems that God still guides *how, what, and who* we pray (for).

8. How does Ephesians 6:18 instruct us to pray? (Note Jude 20)

Praying in the Holy Spirit can mean praying in tongues, but it more likely means to pray as we sense the Holy Spirit prompting us. Have you ever felt to pray for someone, or for some situation? The Holy Spirit guides and directs His people to pray for other believers, certain souls to be saved, current events, family members and more. Have you ever felt this kind of leading of the Holy Spirit in prayer?

Praying In The Spirit

Father, please fill me afresh with the Holy Spirit so that I am continually led by the Holy Spirit in prayer. Help me to feel what the Holy Spirit is saying to me. Help me to have a sensitive heart to the transforming and sanctifying work of the Spirit. Lord, when the Holy Spirit convicts me of those things in my life that are not pleasing to You, give me the grace to repent, surrender and comply. I want my life to be pleasing to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

PRAYING FOR THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

9. According to First Corinthians 14:1, what two things are believers to seek?

It takes prayer and then faith to step out in the gifts of the Spirit in a church service. Have you ever used a gift of the Spirit (mentioned in First Corinthians 12) in a church service? There are 9 gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in First Corinthians 12. We can not rule out that there may be other gifts that the Holy Spirit can gift believers with.

10. Which of the gifts does the Apostle Paul particularly want used in a church service according to First Corinthians 14?

Your homework for our next Bible study meeting is to do the following-

1. Write down the three most urgent needs of our church and present them to your Home Bible Study Group next meeting for prayer.
2. Settle your soul to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit each day in prayer. Note what the Holy Spirit led you to pray for and when He did so.
3. Pray for your Bible study group to give birth to another Bible Study Group.

Amen.



PRAYER THAT WORKS

PRAYING THE SCRIPTURES

Study 4

Praying Scripture-

- Review last session's homework
- Prayerfully approaching Scripture
- Praying the prayers of Scripture
- Praying what we read
- Shaping the way you pray through Scripture

PRAYERFULLY APPROACHING SCRIPTURE

Which is most important to developing our spiritual growth as Christians- reading the Bible or praying? The answer is reading the Bible. But to do this effectively, it teaches us that it must be done prayerfully. One of the goals of daily reading God's Word and setting time aside to pray each day, is to be able to train our spiritual ears to hear God more clearly. Some Christians teach that hearing God is easy because when He talks it's unmistakable. But this type of thinking commits the error of confusing *what God can do* with *what God actually does*. Of course God *can* speak to us in an unmistakable way. But the Scriptures reveal that God ordinarily speaks to His people very softly, gently, and quietly (note Job 26:14; 33:14).

Praying The Scriptures

1. It's possible to read the Bible and miss what God is actually saying. Note how differently people heard things in John 12:28-29.
-

Reading God's Word helps us to become familiar with the voice of God. By reading God's Word we learn not only what God has said, but the language God uses when He speaks. By "language" I don't mean "English" or "Hebrew", rather, I mean the sorts of things that God is likely to say. When you get to know someone, you come to know the way they speak. You learn their favourite expressions, the things they value, and the way they use word-pictures ('metaphors').

From the Scriptures we see that God does indeed speak to people. It seems that He most often speaks through - dreams, visions, or revelations.

2. Some claim that if God speaks, He will do it audibly. But how does Exodus 33:11 *not* support this idea?
-

Just as many of the Pharisees in the days of Jesus did not recognise the voice of God when Christ spoke, today there are many people who glance at God's Word and fail to hear God. If this is how you feel or you are sincerely reading God's Word with the intention of hearing from God, then there are some things that the Scriptures encourages us to pray regularly.

3. What do the Scriptures say is required for people to 'hear' what God is saying? (Matt. 11:15; Revelation 2:7)
-

Praying The Scriptures

In John 5:39 Jesus teaches His reluctant audience that just because they read the Scriptures does not guarantee that they can recognise God's voice.

5. What did Christ have to do for His followers in order for them to understand the Scriptures according to Luke 24:45?

6. What is the prayer of the Psalmist in Psalm 119:18 and how can we adapt this prayer for us today?

If you are struggling to daily read God's Word, repent and pray that you might delight in it. Then approach Scripture prayerfully by asking God to give you 'eyes' to see what His Word says, and to 'hear' what His Word says, and a 'mind' to understand it.

7. Write An Approaching Scripture Prayer here-

PRAYING THE PRAYERS OF SCRIPTURE

Most of the Psalms are prayers. Not all of them can be prayed by us though because some of them are “imprecatory.” This big word means that the author of the Psalm is deeply upset and is venting his anger or frustration out in violent terms. This type of Psalm is not endorsed by God, but rather is acknowledged by God. That is, God is allowing the Psalmist to share his deepest feelings in prayer for the world to read.

But there are Psalms which cry out to God, and declare His greatness, offer Him complete surrender, and seek Him for provision. As we read through these types of Psalms we should consider whether we can use these Psalms to guide our own praying.

8. Consider Psalms 42 - 45. Is there anything in these Psalms which you could relate to and pray? Can you share which Psalm you could pray?

PRAYING WHAT WE READ

The Psalms are not the only prayers in Scripture. For example, Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians is actually a long prayer.

9. Have a glance at Ephesians and see if you can recognise the things that Paul is praying for them, which you could also pray for our church. Note four of these prayer points that your Bible Study Group highlights-

Praying The Scriptures

It's not just the prayers of Scripture that can be prayed. As you read the stories of the Bible consider pausing as you read and praying the positive lessons from the stories that you read. For example, you read how David refused to harm King Saul and you could pray that you could be forgiving and loyal even to those who may wish you ill. Or, you could be reading about Samson being enticed by Delilah and pray that God will keep you from yielding to temptation.

10. Can you think of a Bible passage that either has, or could, inspire a personal prayer from you?

11. What could you pray after reading Philippians 2:13-14?

SHAPING THE WAY YOU PRAY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

12. How might Psalm 40:8 shape the way you pray? (Consider also Psalm 143:10)

As we read the Biblical examples of those who mastered prayer, including Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul, we can be influenced by their examples. It is by becoming familiar with Scripture that we know how to pray more effectively.

Praying The Scriptures

13. What did Christ want His followers to especially know about prayer based on His comments in Luke 18:1?

14. According to Ephesians 3:20, how is God able to answer our prayers?

15. How should knowledge of Matthew 19:26 shape the way we pray? (Refer also to Matthew 6:8; 7:7; 18:19; 21:22)

There is a direct correlation to our knowledge of God's Word and the way we pray.

16. Consider Christ's words in John 15:7. What should be the relationship between our commitment to Scripture *and* prayer?

Your homework for our next Bible study meeting is to do the following-

1. Write down a prayer to share with your Bible Study Group the next time you meet that will sound outrageously hopeful of God doing the impossible for the good of those in your group.
2. Practise praying aloud with your family.
3. Begin to pray the prayers of Scriptures and come prepared to share with your group how this has changed the way you now pray.

Amen.



Study 5

Praying Publicly

- Review last lesson's homework
- What to pray for in public
- How to inspire people with your prayer
- Considered praying
- Ways not to pray in public

WHAT TO PRAY FOR IN PUBLIC

Public praying is an important privilege. It can inspire or bore. Scripture records the public prayers of great leaders who were able to stir the hearts of their fellow countrymen and lead them into revival and victory. Like singing praise, public praying is not only talking to God it's also speaking to and for people (note Eph. 5:19). We will consider some of the great prayers of Scripture and see how these prayers can help us to pray better in public.

1. Read the public prayer of Moses in Deuteronomy 9:26-28. In what way is this prayer educational? In what way is it a challenge to this new generation of Israel?

Praying The Scriptures

Moses was a prophet. He prayed in the way a prophet prays. He prayed publicly in a way that reminded people of God's Word and challenged them to obey God.

When we pray in public we should be praying in a way that reminds those listening of what God's Word has said. We should also pray in a way that reminds people of God's glory and majesty, that is, His ability to help them get through whatever they are facing. Even when we bring before God a great problem or challenge in a public prayer, we are responsible to pray a prayer that will lift the faith of those joining in, not make them more depressed about our predicament!

2. Note what lessons for praying publicly can be learned from the prayer recorded in Acts 4:24-30?

When you pray publicly there are several very practical things you need to ensure.

1. Speak up!
 2. Think beforehand what you are going to pray.
 3. Don't mindless keep addressing your prayer to God (*"Oh God, Father, Lord, we, Oh God, Father, Lord Jesus, come to You Father, and we, Lord, oh God, acknowledge You, Father, Lord, God, Father, Amen"*).
 4. Don't use prayer to spread gossip or hearsay (*"I know You know oh God, that sister Berticia has really been struggling of late and could sure do with a call from someone from our church Lord..."*).
 5. Generally keep your public prayers short.
3. What do you notice about Christ's public prayer in John 11:41-42?

Praying The Scriptures

4. Based on Matthew 6:5, does it seem that Christ endorsed “public” praying?

It seems that Christ objected strongly to religious people praying in public in a way that attempted to impress others with how spiritual they were. Christ didn't condemn people praying in public, but he did condemn those prayed in public to big note themselves and try to impress others with how super-spiritual they were.

5. According to Mark 12:40, what did Christ find objectional about the way these people prayed publicly?

Praying well in public takes practice. Practice praying aloud privately. When you pray out loud in a public setting, don't feel you have to pray long prayers. The goal of public praying is not length, but appropriateness.

HOW TO INSPIRE PEOPLE WITH YOUR PRAYER

6. What inspires or motivates you?

Praying The Scriptures

7. The very first thing you must do to lead people in inspirational praying is to pray with-
- () Lots of information () Lots of groaning () Lots of passion!

A *passionate* person is an *interesting* person. Pray passionately in public! This doesn't mean you have to shout, yell, rant, or rave, but it does mean that you should pray in a way that conveys a sense of *urgency*, a great *reverence* for the One to whom you are praying, and an obvious *interest* in what you are praying for.

8. Based on some of the things that we have looked at so far regarding Public praying, read the prayer of Hezekiah in 2Kings 19:15-19, and note what made this an inspiring public prayer.

CONSIDERED PRAYING



When you know that you are going to have to pray in public, perhaps at an official or formal event, you would do well to listen well to what is happening and pray accordingly. Listen for people's names. Listen for hopes and dreams. Note the actual occasion and its purpose. Have you been doing this tonight?

I was asked to close in prayer at the Launceston Christian School end of year presentations a few years ago. Fortunately I was given a couple days notice which meant that I was able to attend the presentations with a pen, notepad, and a keen ear. By the time the presentations were over I had a list of things which I could pray for which sounded like I had been paying close attention throughout the night.

9. You might be at a family function where you are asked to say grace for the meal. You have several non-Christians at this meal. What would you pray?
-

Of course the idea of praying “considered prayers” also applies to praying with another person who may have just asked you to pray for them. Have you heard things that you could pray about for your Bible study group tonight?

WHAT NOT TO PRAY FOR IN PUBLIC

10. Read First Timothy 2:1-6 and note what Paul taught should be prayed for in public-
-
-



Using a public prayer to mock or criticise another person is not only poor form and a display of unchastened character, it is entirely inappropriate. Praying avariciously (greedily, note James 4:3) is to be avoided generally, but especially when praying in public. For example, praying in public for your

sporting team to win is completely out of order, while praying that they play well and be kept safe is in order.

11. Some people believe that praying prayers which tell God what to do is “faith”. But how does Matthew 6:10 seem to urge a different type of praying?
-

Thus, when praying in public for a terminally ill person it is inappropriate to tell God He *must* heal this person.

Praying The Scriptures

12. Instead, how might we pray in public for a terminally ill person?



Your homework for our next Bible study meeting is to do the following-

1. Attend a prayer meeting and pray publicly with a considered prayer.
2. Read the Model Prayer given by Christ in Matthew 6:9-13 and consider how this prayer should be prayed today.
3. Pray out loud with another person in a way that shows you have really heard them.

Amen.



Study

6

Model Praying

- Review last lesson's homework
- The prayer Jesus gave
- A.C.T.S.
- The benefits of pattern praying
- Keeping a prayer list

THE PRAYER JESUS GAVE

We generally refer to the prayer which Jesus gave His disciples as "The Lord's Prayer." The disciples had been with Jesus only for a short time and already they had observed Him in almost constant prayer. But Christ seemed to pray with a passion and confidence which the disciples had not seen in any of their religious leaders.



1. In one sense, *prayer is simple* - but in another sense *prayer is not a simple exercise*. Read Luke 11:1. How does this reveal that prayer is *not necessarily* a simple exercise?

Model Praying

If prayer was only simple, then it is curious that the Disciples ask Jesus to *teach* them to pray.

2. How does Matthew 6:7 show us that Jesus never intended for the “Lord’s Prayer” to be repeated mindlessly?
-

It is of course possible to take a ‘model prayer’ and make it a *heartfelt* prayer. But this probably takes much practice and a great amount of reflection about what is being prayed. Perhaps our ability to reflect on the Lord’s Prayer might be aided by considering it more closely.

OUR FATHER

3. According to the Apostle Peter, referring to God as “Father” in our prayers involves living a certain way. How are we to live if call upon God as our Father? (1Peter 1:17)
-

4. How did Jesus say we should live if we call God in heaven “our father” based on Matthew 5:16?
-

Some people unfortunately have had a bad experience with their earthly father. A father is supposed to be a *provider*, *protector*, and *priest*. God is the Ultimate expression of what a father really is. Each of these aspects of God’s fatherhood (provide/protector/priest) is extolled in the Lord’s Prayer.

5. What encouraging things did Christ reveal about our Heavenly Father in Matthew 6:6, 8, 26, 32; 7:11?
-

Model Praying

When we pray, we do not pray to some impersonal energy force—we pray to our Heavenly Father who loves us dearly and wants the very best for us. We can pray with confidence that the father-heart of God longs for our best welfare. God, our heavenly Father, knows what we need even before we ask.

IN HEAVEN

Some people have the idea that heaven is *somewhere* within our universe. As difficult as it is to understand, heaven is not somewhere within our universe! Rather, heaven is a spiritual dimension that is intimately connected with our dimensions of space and time. If we could see the spiritual realm we might be able to see that there are *three* realms of heaven. The first realm of the heavens is physical. It is the sky above us (Psalm 19:1; 2Peter 3:12). The second realm, referred to in Scripture as “the heavenlies” or “principalities”, is where demons operate (Eph. 3:10; 6:12).

6. How did Paul refer to the realm in which God immediately dwells? (2Corinthians 12:2)
-

When the Old Covenant was brought to an end, Satan’s access to our Heavenly Father, in the Third Heaven (also referred to as “Heaven”), ceased (Revelation 12:9-10). When Christ walked the earth, the Jews of that day refused to take the name of God on their lips. Instead, they replaced the word “God” with the nearest word that expressed who God was: *Heaven*. This is why Matthew, writing his Gospel to a Jewish audience, chose to record Christ’s statements about “the kingdom of *God*” as “the kingdom of *Heaven*” (compare Matthew 5:3 with Luke 6:20).

But Christ taught His disciples to pray to the God who rules from the realm of Heaven. They were not to pray to *Heaven*, but to the God who *dwells in* Heaven. In Revelation 4:6 it symbolically describes Heaven as “Throne” of God, which is surrounded by “sea” as calm as “glass” or “crystal”. This speaks of the infinite peace that is associated with the very presence of God. When we pray to *our*

Model Praying

Father in Heaven we are praying to the God who is seated on the Throne and is surrounded by infinite peace. Don't think of "heaven" as being located in a galaxy far far away, but rather as a dimension that is right here but *unseen*. Remember the episode in Acts 7 when Stephen was being stoned to death? The Lord opened his eyes and he saw heaven right where he was. He saw God on the Throne and Christ standing at the Father's right hand. Consider this the next time you address God in prayer.

7. How does Romans 8:15 reveal the benefit of having God as our Heavenly Father?
-

HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

Using the Lord's Prayer as a model, we are instructed to open our prayer by addressing the One we are praying to. We are not praying to Heaven, or to any of the occupants of Heaven (such as "saints") but to the *One* who rules from Heaven. In the ancient Hebrew culture, a name carries a meaning more than a mere identifying tag - it captured the character of that person. When God wanted His people to understand an aspect of His character, He would identify Himself with a particular name and often include a title as a suffix to that name.

Name of God	Meaning	Example
El	Mighty	Genesis 14:18
Elohim	Mighty Ones	Genesis 1:1
YHWH (Yahweh)	I AM (Covenant name of God)	Genesis 2:4-5 (Exodus 3:14)
Adonai	Lord	Psalms 40:17
El-Shaddai	Lord Almighty	Psalms 91:1

Model Praying

God is also given titles to describe His relationship with His people, such as-

Titles of God	Meaning	Example
Yahweh Shalom	The LORD is peace	Judges 6:24
Yahweh Jireh	The LORD provides	Gen. 22:13-14
Yahweh Rapha	The LORD heals	Exodus 15:26
Yahweh Rohi	The LORD is my Shepherd	Psalms 23:1

God is also described with various terms and metaphors, such as-

- BRANCH.....Jeremiah 33:15
- BREAD OF GOD.....John 6:33
- BREAD OF LIFE.....John 6:35
- BRIDEGROOM.....Isaiah 62:56
- BRIGHT MORNING STAR.....Revelation 22:16
- CHIEF SHEPHERD.....1 Peter 5:4
- CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL.....Luke 2:25
- CONSUMING FIRE.....Deut. 4:24, Heb. 12:29
- CORNERSTONE.....Isaiah 28:16
- COUNSELOR.....Isaiah 9:6
- DESIRED OF ALL NATIONS.....Haggai 2:7
- DOOR.....John 10:7
- FIRSTFRUITS.....1 Cor.15:20-23
- GOOD SHEPHERD.....John 10:11
- GREAT HIGH PRIEST.....Hebrews 4:14
- HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL.....Isaiah 49:7
- LAMB OF GOD.....John 1:29

To “hallow” is to *regard as holy*. When we pray, we should adore God as He is revealed to us in His various names and regard His name as the sum of all He is (Psalm 34:3; 138:2).

YOUR KINGDOM COME

The Kingdom of God is the rule of God over the whole earth. It contrasted with the rule of God over Israel. It was the message of many of the prophets that a day was coming when all nations would acknowledge God as their King (Psalm 67:2; 72:11, 17; Isaiah 66:18; Jeremiah 3:17; Malachi 3:12). The prophetic 'promise' that the Kingdom of God would one day come was a hope that every Jew held with an expectation that its arrival would rid them of the abominable Roman oppressors (note Mark 15:43). Jesus centred much of His teaching on the Kingdom of God, which Matthew deliberately refers to as *the Kingdom of Heaven*. But perhaps to the bewilderment of His audience, Christ taught that this Kingdom was not to be thought of as a *physical* Kingdom.

8. What does Luke 17:20-21 reveal about the Kingdom of God that Christ taught?

Even today there are some Christians who don't realise what Jesus was saying about the nature of the Kingdom of God. He didn't speak of it being a Kingdom that was two thousand years away! He used such expressions as- *the kingdom of God has come upon you* (Matthew 12:28), *the kingdom of God is at hand* (Mark 1:15), *the kingdom of God has come near to you* (Luke 10:9), *the kingdom of God has come near* (Luke 10:11). Added to this, Jesus plainly told His disciples that many of them would "see" the Kingdom of God come (Matthew 16:28).

Put simply, the Kingdom of God is where God is King! When we pray today for *Your Kingdom come* we should be praying for God to be the King of our lives and for Him to help us to submit to Him.

When the Old Testament was brought to an end in 70AD, the Kingdom of Christ had then come.

YOUR WILL BE DONE

Human nature causes us to deteriorate our spiritual life. At the core of the Christian's spiritual life is their utter devotion to God and His will. The more we move away from that core, which is all too easy to do, the less truly spiritual we become. This is why we should continually pray for God's will to be done in us.

9. Read Philippians 2:12-13. What is it that enables us to do the will of God?

10. What do you think the main reason is for believers not conforming to the will of God?

Each day, as you pray through this model prayer, ensure that you do not fail to omit asking for God to have His will done in your life.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Some believers claim that it is unspiritual to ask God for material things. But in the model prayer which Christ gave His followers He included this very material phrase. We are told by Christ to ask God to meet our daily physical needs.

11. What promise from God can we take heart from in Philippians 4:19 that should encourage us to pray to God for our needs to be met?

12. What are three urgent physical/material needs that you would like God to meet?

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Some preachers teach that once you become a Christian (by having your sins forgiven) you never need to ask God to forgive you of your sins again. But this model prayer includes the prayer for God to forgive us for our sins. It takes humility to acknowledge that we are guilty of sin. It takes even more humility to ask God for forgiveness.

13. What does the Scripture promise for those who humble themselves before God? (James 4:6)

14. Can the believer legitimately pray Psalm 51 today?

Interestingly, this is the only aspect of this model prayer which Christ immediately elaborates on.

15. How are we to respond to God's forgiveness according to Matthew 6:12, 14?

We do forgive others *in order to be* forgiven by God. Rather, we can forgive others because we have been forgiven.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

This model prayer leads the believer to pray for a deeper respect for sin in much the same way we should respect poison, the edges of high cliffs, and swimming with sharks. If you respect sin, you will recognise how dangerous it is. The first step into sin is *yielding to temptation*.

16. Apart from Prayer, what else did Jesus say His followers should do regarding the dangers of temptation? (Matt. 26:41)

Model Praying

17. What promise about temptation does First Corinthians 10:13 make?

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

The forces of evil are at work against the believer. Even Jesus had to overcome the onslaught of the Evil One (Matt. 4).

18. Note Luke 22:31-32. What effect does prayer have on the believer's protection from evil? What does this tell us about how Jesus treats followers who fail Him?

Pray that God will keep you from the Evil One.

YOURS IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY

Acknowledging God is the essence of worship. In the model prayer which Jesus gave, He rounded off this prayer by leading His followers to acknowledge God as the Ruler of their lives ("Yours is the 'Kingdom'"), the source of strength to do anything ("Yours is the 'power'") and the reason for living ("Yours is the 'glory'").

19. What are three things you can thank God for?

If you spent just a few minutes each day praying through these model prayer aspects you will deepen your prayer life and discover that enduring in prayer is easier when you pray along the lines of a model prayer.

SPEND AN HOUR IN PRAYER



A.C.T.S.

There is a popular model prayer based on the acronym - A.C.T.S.

- A** *Adore*: praise and worship God
- C** *Confess*: your sins to God and ask for forgiveness
- T** *Thank*: acknowledge your blessings to God
- S** *Supplications*: present your requests to God

THE BENEFIT OF PATTERN PRAYING

20. What benefits can you see that there might be in praying according to a pattern or model?

We still do. Most of us struggle with prayers. We forget to pray, and when we remember, we hurry through prayers with hollow words. Our minds drift; our thoughts scatter like a covey of quail. Why is this? Prayer requires minimal effort. No location is prescribed. No particular clothing is required. No title or office is stipulated. You'd think we were wrestling a greased pig.

Max Lucado, "Out Live Your Life", page 140

21. What might the possible disadvantage(s) be?

KEEPING A PRAYER LIST

Our passionate prayers move the heart of God. "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16). Prayer does not change God's nature; who he is will never be altered. Prayer does, however, impact the flow of history. God has wired his world for power, but he calls on us to flip the switch.

Max Lucado, "Out Live Your Life", page 138

Some day, it would be a valuable spiritual exercise to write a prayer list. You might choose to categories your prayer points under the following categories listed over the page. This prayer list might be something which you pray through once a month either in one sitting or by taking one of the four sections and praying one section per week.

Model Praying

22. Complete 5 prayer points under each of these categories-

FAMILY

FRIENDS

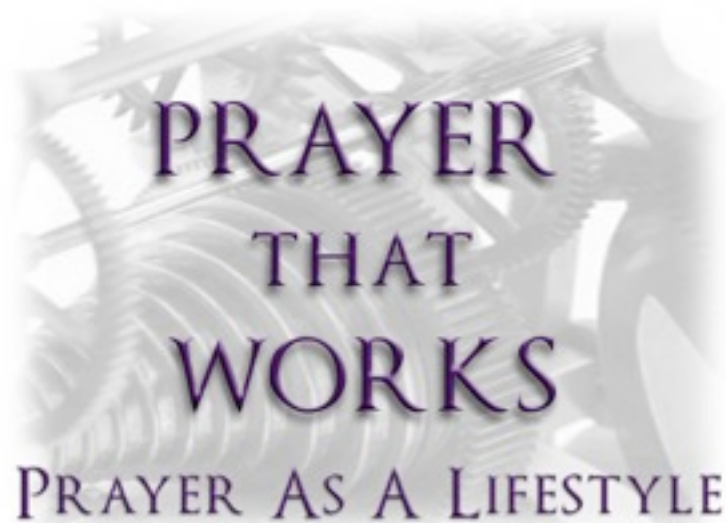
CHURCH

MY DREAMS

Your homework for our next Bible study meeting is to do the following-

1. Pray through a model prayer each day until our next Bible Study.
2. Attempt to pray one day without ceasing.
3. Pray through your Prayer List at least once before our next meeting.
4. Note any answers to your prayers to report in our next meeting.

Amen.



Study

7

Prayer As A Lifestyle

- Review last study's homework
- Pray without ceasing
- Incorporating prayer into the mundane
- Instant in prayer
- What to do with answered prayer

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

The Gospel of Luke is also known as the *Gospel of Prayer*. In this Gospel, Jesus is praying all the time.

1. Note what circumstances Luke records Jesus praying-
 - a. Luke 3:21 _____
 - b. Luke 5:16 _____
 - c. Luke 6:12 _____
 - d. Luke 9:18 _____
 - e. Luke 11:1 _____
 - f. Luke 22:32 _____
 - g. Luke 22:41 _____

Prayer As A Lifestyle

In our past studies in this series on prayer we have looked at the Scriptures which instruct us to set aside time to deliberately focus on prayer. This is an important spiritual discipline.

2. In what way does Acts 3:1 show that the early Christians considered setting a specific time aside to pray?

Beyond setting specific time aside to pray, the apostles announced that spiritual leadership demanded that they be “devoted” to prayer (Acts 6:4).

3. Why was Cornelius considered a good man? (Acts 10:1-2)

We read in the Book of Acts that the early Christians would pray at set times, pray continually, and then have special times of urgent prayer (note Acts 12:5). We would do well today to follow this example. Sadly, although spiritual leadership fundamentally involves prayer and leading others in prayer, all too often when a spiritual leader calls those in his charge to prayer too few respond. Someone has said that the true size of a church is not how many are present Sunday morning but how many are at the church’s prayer meeting.

4. A Christian is filled, led, empowered and gifted by the Holy Spirit. According to Romans 8:26, how does this effect how we pray?

Prayer As A Lifestyle

5. In the Apostle Paul's list of the 27 things needed to develop sincere Christian community (Romans 12:9-21), how does he say we should pray?

6. Based on Romans 15:30, how did Paul seek to motivate believers to pray?

7. What types of prayers are called for in Ephesians 6:18?

"Praying at times" writes the great apostle of prayer to fellow believers, "in the Spirit". Paul seems to be saying that if we can attune our spiritual ears to the leading of the Holy Spirit we can sense what we should be praying for at that time.

8. Have you ever experienced this type of Holy Spirit leading or prompting to pray? Describe one such moment-

With all prayer "and supplication" adds the Apostle. Supplication is *requesting*. Some people teach that prayer should not be seen as something you do to make requests of God. This is too selfish they argue. But when we pray our requests to God we are confessing our dependency upon Him. When we pray our requests to God and He provides in response to our praying, He is the One who is glorified. Therefore, we join with the Apostle Paul and pray with supplications.

9. What does the Apostle say in Philippians 4:6 is the answer to a lot of our anxiety?
-

INCORPORATING PRAYER INTO THE MUNDANE

Some people don't pray much and still others don't pray for much. One reason for the former is that some people regard praying as something you must be fully focussed on. To them, this requires a set time, perhaps a set place, and especially peace and quiet. This is what the monks and nuns of the Medieval period largely thought of prayer. But, if we recall what we see in the Gospel of Luke about the way Jesus prayed, we notice that He prayed nearly all the time in the midst of whatever He was doing.

Therefore, it is reasonable, right, and required that we pray when we are walking, waking, weaving, welding, whining, winnowing, whipping, whistling, working, wandering, or whatever.

10. Read Colossians 1:9 and tick the following correct answer-
When Paul told the Colossians he prayed for them without ceasing, he was probably-
- () Having a prayer breakfast with the political leaders of his day
 - () In the middle of a prayer and praise conference
 - () taking a year off from preaching to do a prayer retreat
 - () In a Roman jail, manacled in chains, somewhere.
11. What did Paul tell the Colossians to combine with their steadfast praying? (Col. 4:2)
-

What are you thankful to God for right now?

INSTANT IN PRAYER

It seems that God is happy to hear from His children anytime. Some of us lead lives that are far from routine which means that having a regular early morning prayer time is quite difficult. The good news is for those who can't quite make a regular prayer time a part of their routine is that they can pray *instantly*.

12. Although no-one would have known it at the time, how was Nehemiah being spiritual at the moment of Nehemiah 2:4?
-

Being instant in prayer involves being in a spiritual state of listening to God as well as speaking to Him. Nehemiah needed instant wisdom and prayed instantly to get it. We too can pray constantly in the sense that we are ever "listening" and always prepared to pray instantly.

13. In First Thessalonians 5:17 Paul tells his readers to constantly pray. But in First Thessalonians 1:2 and 3:10 he has told them something else. How do these preceding references (1Thess. 1:2; 3:10, see also 2Thess. 1:11) affect his instructions in 1Thessalonians 5:17?
-

14. What does Second Timothy 1:3 reveal about the Apostle Paul?
-

When I was a younger man I drove around Australia. By the time I arrived in the Pilbara (in far north west Western Australia) I knew no-one where I was staying. I arrived at a church which was pastored by a White Australian but was mainly comprised of Aborigines. The first meeting I attended was their prayer meeting. They treated me very coolly upon my arrival. But when I joined in the prayer meeting and they heard me pray, their entire attitude toward me changed! Suddenly, I was their brother.

WHAT TO DO WITH ANSWERED PRAYER

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRAYER AND PRAISE

15. Read the story in Luke 17:12-19. Why was Christ somewhat outraged? In what way does this show us how God expects us to respond to Him answering our prayers?
-

In his book, *More Than A Theory*, Dr Hugh Ross lists three types of miracles. Firstly, he writes, there are “**sustaining**” miracles. These are the miracles that makes life and matter possible. It includes the miracles of physical laws which govern the universe which God has fixed (Jer. 33:25). It includes God’s ‘sustaining’ of the world (refer Heb. 1:3). Secondly, there are “**transformational**” miracles where God is able to take that which already exists and by divine power transform it. For example, God took dirt and transformed it into a Man. Christ took water and transformed it into wine. God used the apostles to transform diseased people into well people. Thirdly, there are “**creative**” miracles where He speaks things which are not into existence. Genesis 1 tells us that after the six *days* of creative activity, He ceased from creative miracles in this dimension (He will one day do away with this dimension and create a New Heaven and a New Earth, a new dimension governed by different physical laws, Rev. 21-22).

Sometimes we are disappointed with God’s seeming lack of answers to our prayer demands. But, I wonder whether we appreciate the abundance of miracles which God has already provided for us?

16. What possibly positive affect does praising God have on our mental health according Philipians 4:8?
-

Prayer that works is prayer that brings us into awful fellowship with God. This is made possible through praying privately, for others, in the Spirit, by the Scriptures, with a pattern, and continually. Prayer that works involves working at prayer. History bears testimony that nothing great has ever been achieved for God and His glory without working prayer.

Let’s pray.

Amen.