

HOW TO PREVAIL IN PRAYER

(A look at how an effective prayer life may be possible)

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James 5:16b

“The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

Thought Starter

“Prayer can either be the biggest blessing or the biggest waste of time in the Christian life.”

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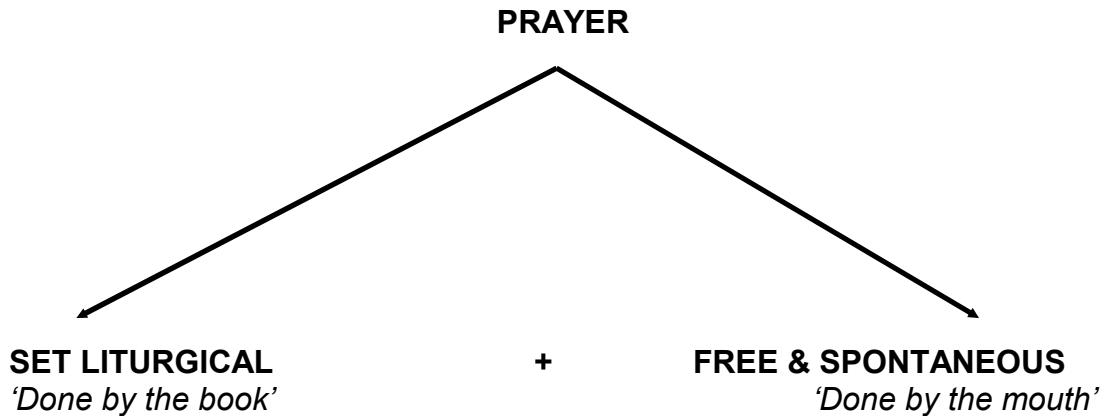
Part A: Introduction

DEFINITION
Prayer is simply a method of two-way communication wherein the believer in Jesus both listens to and talks to God whilst exercising their mind and expressing the desires of their heart.

Main Scripture References: These include Genesis 18:20f, Psalm 137, Isaiah 59:1-4, Ezekiel 14:1-5, Matthew 21:18-22, Luke 18:9-14, John 17, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, James 4:1-12, 5:13-18 & Revelation 6:9-11.

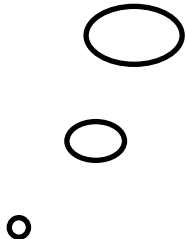
N. B: Please refer to the word 'prayer' in any Bible concordance.

THE MAIN TYPES OF PRAYER



N.B: Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. Either type could be more appropriate in some situations than in others.

THOUGHT STARTER!
What do you believe are the most common hindrances existing in:-
A. *One's personal prayer life?*
B. *The prayer life of a local Church?*



Part B: Hindrances to Prayer

PERSONAL <i>'Affecting ourselves.'</i>	CONGREGATIONAL <i>'Affecting the local Church.'</i>	GENERAL <i>'Affecting all Christians and Churches.'</i>
<p>1) Selfishness, e.g. we may really be praying <i>'let my will be done.'</i></p> <p>2) Self-pity, leading to <i>'waily'</i> instead of <i>'daily'</i> prayers.</p> <p>3) Sin, especially persistent and wilful sins e.g. pride.</p> <p>4) The daily distractions of living in a highly pressurised society.</p> <p>5) Unbelief and uncertainty about some of the teachings and promises in Scripture.</p> <p>6) Various mishaps, e.g. accident, bereavement or illness.</p> <p>7) Wandering thoughts caused by tiredness and personal worries.</p>	<p>1) Bad organisation and poor attendance at relevant meetings.</p> <p>2) Division and Resentment breeding a lack of forgiveness.</p> <p>3) False teaching, false experiences and false ministries.</p> <p>4) Lust for position, power and prestige causing division</p> <p>5) The presence of unregenerate people wrongly thinking they are Christians</p> <p>6) Unconcern for the practical needs of poor and vulnerable people.</p> <p>7) Worries about money, the building or membership levels</p>	<p>1) Distracting cultural pressures; often derived through the media.</p> <p>2) Continual economic and financial uncertainty.</p> <p>3) Growing spiritual deception giving counterfeit revivals</p> <p>4) Misplaced expectations concerning the nature of revival.</p> <p>5) Worldly ways of thinking that stress experience above Biblically revealed truth.</p> <p>6) Various Satanic temptations, which entice one from God</p> <p>7) The Lord withdrawing His Spirit and refusing to answer prayer.</p>

However the most crippling hindrance is unbelief in God's provision.

THOUGHT STARTER!

What do you think are the best ways to overcome hindrances in: -

A. Ones own personal prayer life?

B. The prayer life of a local Church?



Part C: Learning To Prevail In Prayer

STEP 1: Begin by having a reverent fear of the Lord. Know whom one is relating to in prayer. Have a reasonable grasp of basic Bible Doctrine.



STEP 2: Ask for the wisdom and faith to pray in a way that accords with God's will for a specific situation.



STEP 3: Have an open Bible nearby and be willing to use it as a basis for any specific prayers.



STEP 4: Be willing to correct any assumptions and motivations in light of God's word.



STEP 5: Entertain realistic expectations about the types of prayer God is likely to answer.



STEP 6: Confess any known sins whilst entrusting any hidden sins to the cleansing blood of Jesus.



STEP 7: Avoid any gimmicks or false teachings about prayer. Above all else, do not switch off the mind.



STEP 8: Take spiritual discernment very seriously and test carefully any possible 'leadings' from God.



STEP 9: Realise that one is not alone in prayer. Present is the Holy Spirit and all the resources of heaven.



STEP 10: Keep Jesus central by focusing upon His person and His work upon the cross.



STEP 11: Be clear on what is being prayed for. Try to be specific. Use everyday life and background knowledge to feed in prayer topics.



STEP 12: Be sensible in praying within the limits of your health and circumstances. Avoid endless repetition or spiritual marathons.



STEP 13: Do not fear Satan, but be ready to employ Biblical methods of spiritual warfare should the need arise. Know when to ask for help.



STEP 14: Be willing to persevere in an attitude of faith even when one seems to receive the opposite of what was prayed for.



STEP 15: Know when to cease praying about a particular matter and be willing to entrust it into the hands of God.



STEP 16: Enjoy your prayer life and be thankful for any blessings that may result from it. Adopt a healthy variety of approaches in prayer.



STEP 17: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of your praying. Assess it by the 'fruit' in one's own personal life and in the lives of other people.

PRODUCES MANY BLESSINGS

