

The Power and Purpose of Prayer

Introduction

Prayer is like a conversation with God, but sometimes we do all the talking and never stop to listen. Imagine a long train ride with a new friend. At first, you might be excited to have this extended period of uninterrupted time to get to know this new person, but if they talk the entire trip, even asking questions that seem to invite answers, but never pausing to let anyone else talk, or share their own stories, it's not going to work. That would be frustrating and wouldn't feel like a real conversation.

In the same way, we sometimes talk to God without stopping to hear what He might say. Prayer is supposed to be two-way—talking and listening—sharing our hearts and letting God guide and change us. When we learn to pray like that, it becomes one of the most wonderful privileges in the Christian life.

1. Why We Pray

Prayer is more than a way to ask for things. Prayer is about knowing God and being with Him. Through prayer, we talk to God as our Father, because Jesus has made us His children. We can come to Him anytime, knowing that He loves us and wants us to come close.

Prayer is also an act of faith. When we pray, we admit that we are not strong enough on our own. It is how we say, 'Lord, I need You.' Prayer helps us trust God's answers — whether He says yes,

no, or wait. Prayer is not just about changing our situation, but about letting God change us.

2. How We Pray

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray by giving them the Lord's Prayer. It is not just a prayer to repeat but a pattern to guide all of our prayers. Each part shows us a different way to talk to God and keeps our prayers balanced.

First, we call God 'Father.' This reminds us that we are His children. Prayer is a family conversation — we come with confidence, because He loves us.

Then we say, 'Hallowed be Your name.' This means we praise God and honour His name. Prayer should begin with worship, not just our needs. Praise helps us see God's greatness and trust Him.

Next, we pray, 'Your kingdom come.' This is where we say we want God's will, not just our own. It is a prayer of surrender. We ask God to work in our lives, in our families, in our church, and in our world.

Then we ask for 'daily bread.' This means we bring our needs to God — food, money, health, strength, and everything we need each day. We trust Him to give us what is best, even if it is just enough for today.

We also pray, 'Forgive us our sins.' Prayer is where we confess our sins and receive forgiveness. But Jesus links this with forgiving others. Forgiveness does not mean saying what they did was

okay. It means giving our hurt to God and trusting Him to deal with it. Forgiving others sets us free from bitterness.

Finally, we pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.' This means asking God to guide our steps and protect us from sin. We cannot fight temptation alone — we need God's help to stay faithful.

3. Perseverance in Prayer

After teaching the Lord's Prayer, Jesus told a story about a man who went to his neighbour at midnight to ask for bread. He kept knocking until the neighbour got up and helped him. Jesus said we should pray like that—keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.

Jesus also said that God is a good Father who loves to give good gifts. If earthly parents give good things to their children, how much more will God give His children what they need?

It's important to remember, this also works both ways—a good father also won't give his children gifts that he knows will harm them, or are not in their best interests, no matter how much they ask. Though we persevere in prayer, we should also learn to discern and recognize if we're asking for things that he isn't giving us for a reason.

And never forget, the best gift God gives is Himself—through the Holy Spirit. Prayer is not just about answers but about knowing God more.

The ACTS Prayer Model

A – Adoration

Begin by praising God for who He is. Tell Him what you love about Him—His goodness, power, holiness, and love. Adoration helps us remember that God is great and worthy of our worship.

C – Confession

Be honest with God about your sins and mistakes. Tell Him what you have done wrong, and ask Him to forgive you. Then choose to forgive others by giving the hurt to God and trusting Him to deal with it. Confession cleans our hearts and brings us closer to God.

T – Thanksgiving

Thank God for what He has already done in your life. This can include answered prayers, your family, health, church, and blessings you might overlook. Gratitude helps us see God's goodness and trust Him more.

S – Supplication

Now bring your requests to God. Pray for your own needs, your family, your church, your friends, and the world. This can include asking for healing, wisdom, strength, justice, and for God's kingdom to come.

You can pray through ACTS slowly or quickly, spending more time where you feel led. It is a simple way to make sure your prayers are full and balanced.