

BASIC PRAYER

NEW HOPE INTERNATIONAL CHURCH

LESSON 1-THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

Why do we pray?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Defining Prayer

Understanding The Purposes of Prayer

INTRODUCTION

"Prayer is an unnatural activity. From birth we have been learning the rules of self-reliance as we strain and struggle to achieve self-sufficiency To people in the fast lane, determined to make it on their own, prayer is an embarrassing interruption." - Bill Hybels

Jesus found this to be so important that He taught the disciples at length on how to go to God in prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). If it is necessary for them, it is necessary for any of His disciples now.

Matthew 6:9-13 *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. ¹³And do no lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

WHY DO WE PRAY?

You would discover many reasons that would compel you to pray, and as we study them, may your prayer life take on a new height.

1. Build Relationship

Establish a close loving relationship, or joyful fellowship with God through a two-way communication (speaking and listening). Although God is all-knowing (Matthew 6:32), He still wants us to pray; to talk to Him about matters in our hearts. He wants us to exercise our independent free will to choose to pray (Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 11:9-13, Philippians 4:4-7). God knows whether we love Him through our communication with Him. If we love Him, we will obey His commandments, including that of praying unceasingly (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 John 3:22, Psalm 32:6, Luke 11:1). This means going to God for every area of our life. When we pray, we know that God is able to understand us, our situations, our trials and our needs.

1 John 3:22 *And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*

LESSON 1-THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

Why do we pray?

1 Thessalonians 5:17 *pray without ceasing,*

Psalms 32:6 *For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.*

2. Know the Will of God

In our lives, there are many decisions to make. Praying helps us to know God's will in our lives. As Christians, God also puts in us the Holy Spirit that can guide and prompt us.

God wants to communicate to us. If we wait on God, we would hear Him to speak to us, about people and situations. It also reflects our trust in Him because we believe that He has the best plans for our lives (Luke 12:47, John 16:13, Romans 8:16, Ephesians 5:17).

Luke 12:47 *And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

John 16:13 *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

Ephesians. 5:17 *Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

3. Accomplish Christ's Work

God wants us to work with Him to bring as many people into His Kingdom as possible (Matthew 18:18-20). We accomplish the works of Christ on earth by the activation of the spiritual world; either by God's intervention or the believer's authority in binding and controlling of evil spirits (John 14:12-14, James 4:7, Luke 10:19).

Matthew 18:18-20 *Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*

John 14:12-14 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*

Luke 10:19 *Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

LESSON 1-THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

Why do we pray?

4. Increase Burden

We increase burden for people through interceding for other believers, non-believers and national authorities (John 17:20-26, Job 42:10, Luke 22:44, I Timothy 2:1-2). Since we are made in His image (Genesis 1:26), we can relate to His feelings for people through prayer (Psalm 86:1-5, Psalm 80:4, Isaiah 56:7).

Job 42:10 *And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

John 17:20-26 *'I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.²⁴ Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.²⁵ O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.²⁶ And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.'*

Isaiah 56:7 *Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.'*

5. Receive Forgiveness

Our prayer time is also a time of cleansing of our hearts, motives and lives before God (Psalm 51:10-12). We ask God for forgiveness and claim His promise of forgiveness (1 John 1:9). God frees us from guilt and condemnation and know that we are justified before God by the blood of Jesus.

Psalm 51:10-12 *Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*

6. Receive blessings

When we pray to God, we can ask Him to bless us and to meet our needs (Matthew 7:7, John 16:24). There are many times God not just meet our needs but also gives us our desires according to His will. God hears us when we pray in His name because of the authority and the Person of the Lord Jesus. We claim the promises of God when we

LESSON 1-THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

Why do we pray?

pray. We cast our cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7) and receive peace (Philippians 4:6-7) and strength (Philippians 4:13). It reflects our dependency on Him, the Giver and not on the things He has given to us: our gifts, talents and resources.

Matthew 7:7 *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

John 16:24 *Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

1 Peter 5:7 *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

Philippians 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

7. Build the Church

It is a support ministry to the Body of Christ. When we pray for the sick, they get healed. When we intercede on behalf of our brothers, sisters and leaders, we are helping to build the body of Christ. It is also the key to church growth (Acts 2:47, Acts 4:31).

Acts 2:42, 47 *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

Acts 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*

8. Build faith

“Build yourself up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20). We build ourselves in our faith as we pray according to Scriptures and expect God to work in our lives. As we pray in tongues, we edify ourselves (1 Corinthians 14:4). When God answers our prayers, we are encouraged in our faith. We are able to share this confidence with others and help to build up the prayer atmosphere of our groups and our church.

9. Overcome Temptations

Praying also helps us to overcome temptations of the world and the flesh. We learn to relinquish our rights to God. We draw on God's strength and power to overcome our weaknesses and trust God to give us the victory. God transforms our character when we pray.

LESSON 1-THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

Why do we pray?

Matthew 26:41 *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

SUMMARY

Prayer is nothing ritualistic. It is about communicating with our Father in Heaven about every thing and any things and seeing God answering our requests.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the least and 10 being the most), what difference does prayer make in your life?
2. Which 2 purposes for prayer gives you the most impetus to pray and why?

LESSON 2-THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Looking at Prayer Busters and Prayer Boosters

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Causes of Unanswered Prayer
Keys to Answered Prayers
Types Of Answers To Prayers

INTRODUCTION

PRAYER BUSTERS

When our prayers are not answered, we tend to think, "What's wrong with God? Why is He not answering?" rather than looking at our own lives to see if there is some "malfunctions" that may be blocking our prayers, even the well-meaning and well-timed ones. This is a normal human response. Many times though, the Bible has shown the reasons for unanswered prayer lie in the life of the praying person, and these reasons are called prayer busters here.

1. Everything but Prayer

The most common cause for us is found in James 4:2, "You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God." Many times we say I'll pray for you or keep you in prayers, but do not actually do so. Thinking about it is different from actually praying and waiting on God. If we don't pray, we can't expect God to answer.

2. Contaminated by Sin

Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear." The basis for prayer rests upon our being in fellowship with Him. Such fellowship is broken if we do not confess our sins to Him. We should examine ourselves to see what are the sins that contaminate our hearts. It could be pride, arrogance, unfaithfulness or idolatry. If we are tolerating sin in our lives, it is no use praying unless it is a prayer of confession. Receive the Lord's forgiveness, and then He will listen when you open your heart to Him.

3. Irregular, undisciplined and impatient

Some of us may have short prayer fuse. We are not persistent in our prayers and may be undisciplined, that is praying only as and when we remember.

At times, we may just "do a quick one and get it over with." "Lazy people want much but get little, while the diligent are prospering." (Living Bible, Proverbs 13:4). Such prayers are insincere and ineffective and would not reach the throne room of God.

LESSON 2-THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Looking at Prayer Busters and Prayer Boosters

4. Inadequate Faith

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6). Sometimes, we pray ritualistically and that does not require faith. God wants us to approach Him with an expectant heart. To overcome this problem, read the Scriptures and look at what God has done for His people. Then review His track record in your own life, looking for evidence of His power, His faithfulness, and His provision. Tune your mind properly so that when you finally pray, it will be a God who is able. When you pray, plan on seeing a mighty demonstration of His power.

Remember, Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

5. Broken Relationships

Such relationships often result in unforgiveness and bitterness. We need to first reconcile with those we have grudges against. Matthew 5:23-24 says, "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Forgive others and you would enter in a joyful experience of receiving God's forgiveness for yourselves.

Sometimes, it also results in unforgiveness towards God when it seems as if God never answer our prayers or give us what we want. Other times, we find it hard to forgive ourselves and bear the guilt and condemnation for things or relationships that have turned disastrous. Come to God and ask for His forgiveness and for His power to set you free. Then lift your burdens and cares to Him and see Him work in His marvelous ways.

6. Self-centeredness

James 4:3 says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." When we ask with selfishness or uncaring attitude, God will not answer. We need to ask God to change us. God is committed to developing a people who will reflect His character in this world, and His character always expresses unselfishness and concern and compassion for people.

PRAYER BOOSTERS

Knowing that prayer busters would result in unanswered prayers, we now look at and apply what would boost our prayer lives.

LESSON 2-THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Looking at Prayer Busters and Prayer Boosters

1. It is offered in faith and boldness

Matthew 21:22 says, "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." We must have faith in God and in His ability to answer, otherwise, prayer will not be answered. We must not base our thinking on human values, cultures, logic, etc. but on the Word of God. Any negative confessions after a prayer will cancel or nullify the faith. Wrong beliefs or concepts of God Himself will also hinder our faith.

Is our faith weak? Then increase it with the help of God's Word (Romans 10:17). Have expectant faith and the boldness to approach God without fear (Ephesians 3:11-12).

Ephesians 3:11-12 *according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*

2. It is offered in the spirit of humility

Humility reflects a right relationship with God. Jesus is our model of true humility. Humility is not a sign of weakness but a hidden strength. Psalm 34:18 says "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit." James 4:6 says, "...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

3. It is offered in harmony with God's will

Too often, prayers are unanswered because they are more concerned with our will rather than God's will. 1 John 5:14 says, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

4. It is offered by those righteous before God

To be righteous before God means to live by faith and in obedience, recognizing that it is possible because of God's righteousness upon us. 1 Peter 3:12 "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

James 5:16 *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (NIV)*

5. It is offered in the spirit of thanksgiving

Do we think God will help us with our present burdens if we don't take the time to thank Him for the past blessings? (Ephesians 5:20, Philippians 4:6). 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 says, "Pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God

LESSON 2-THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Looking at Prayer Busters and Prayer Boosters

in Christ Jesus for you.”

6. It is offered with persistence and in specifics

The pictures of people who are persistent are found in the parable of the persistent friend (Luke 11:5-10) and the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8). When we ask God for something, we should be as specific as we can, so that when it is answered, we know that the answer is from God, and this will increase our faith.

7. It is offered in reverence for God

Have the right attitude towards God and fear Him (Psalm 145:18-20).

Psalm 145:18-20 *The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. ¹⁹He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. ²⁰The LORD preserves all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.*

8. It is offered in the name of Jesus

The name of our Lord Jesus means much more than simply adding a little phrase at the end of our prayers. We must realize that Jesus is the only way by which we can approach God (John 14:6). We must view Him as our “High Priest” who intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:24-25).

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Hebrews 7:24-25 *But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

TYPES OF ANSWERS TO PRAYER**1. Green Light: “Request granted”**

This is when your request is right, the timing is right and you are right, and God says “Go!”

1 John 3:21-22 *“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. ²²And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”*

LESSON 2-THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Looking at Prayer Busters and Prayer Boosters

2. Green Light: “Request granted, but not as you expect”

This is when your request is right, the timing is right but you are not exactly right, and God says “Go”.

We should be careful that we do not dictate to God as to how to answer our prayers.

Isaiah 55:8-9 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. ⁹“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

3. Amber Light: “Request granted, but not yet”

This is when your request is right but the timing is wrong and God says “Slow”.

For most people, this answer is almost like no because we are such impatient and at times short-sighted people. But God is not intimidated by our childish demands for instant gratification of “I want it now!” He simply shakes his head at our immaturity and says, “Trust me. I know what I’m doing. I have my reasons.” Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.”

Sometimes God delays in order to test our faith. He wants to know if we still trust Him when we do not see immediate results. Sometimes God delays so that He can modify our requests. Over times, we may see that our request was not quite legitimate or being narrow minded as it was not in line with His plan. At times He delays so that we can develop character qualities such as endurance, trust, patience or submission - qualities that come in the time of waiting. Even so, God wants us to wait for His timing so that when He answers, it will reap the results that are intended.

4. Red Light: “Request denied”

This is when your request is wrong, and God says “No”.

We must trust that God, who knows all and knows what is best, would do what is best for us. He says “No” at times when our prayers are not appropriate (like Peter’s request at Jesus’ transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-8), our motives are impure (prayers like “O God, change the other person!” instead of looking at our own shortcomings that may have affected the relationship) or to seek our own glory (praying that “O Lord, help our church to grow” with the real meaning of “I want to be a star with a big church and lots of media coverage”). God looks at our hearts and He knows us better than ourselves. On our part, we ask God to change us and continue to fully trust Him especially in the light of His promises (1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 12:5-11, Habakkuk 3:17-19).

LESSON 2-THE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Looking at Prayer Busters and Prayer Boosters

Habakkuk 3:17-19 *Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls-- ¹⁸Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.*

SUMMARY

As we walk with God, we would know Him and His heartbeat better. He has always the best interest in us. Let us boost our prayer lives continually in our Christian life and reap the blessing.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you do when your prayers are not answered?
2. What may be the one thing that "bust" your prayer? What can you practically do such that it would not affect your prayer life?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Checklist For A Fruitful Prayer Time
Use of ACTS Model To Pray

INTRODUCTION

The important thing is to cultivate a regular and active prayer life with God. I would suggest at least half an hour daily. Let us look at the practical helps to improve our prayer life.

HOW WE SHOULD PRAY

1. Develop a daily personal devotional prayer time

Set aside a fixed daily time and place to spend with God. If it is part of your devotional time, then make sure you do have sufficient time. The best time is still in the morning, when we are freshest. Spend at least half an hour in prayer daily. You may also break up your prayer time over the day, e.g. 15 minutes each in the morning, lunch time and night. It's not only the quantity but the quality of that time. This is your SPECIAL TIME to be alone with your Heavenly Father! So it is not a ritualistic or boring moment but a meaningful, insightful and refreshing encounter.

Psalm 5:3 *My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up.*

Remember too it is important to have the right posture for prayer. Laying down on bed, sloughing etc. would only lead to your Quiet Time being real "quiet". The best position is to sit upright. Some would prefer to pray standing or walking.

2. Read and meditate on the Word

When you read the Word, you'd also spend time praying. This is different from the longer periods of prayer. Such devotional times can be enhanced through the help of Bible guides. Some good ones are: Daily Bread, Every Day with Jesus and Vision for the Nations. You should ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal God's truth to you.

John 14:26 *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

LESSON 3-PRACTICAL APPROACH TO PRAYER

Disciplining yourself to pray

Joshua 1:8 *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”*

3. Pray in the Spirit in tongues

1 Corinthians 14:15 says, “What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.” When you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, you receive the gift of tongues, which enables you to pray in the Spirit (Acts 10:45-46) With this gift, you’d find that you can pray for longer periods. Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered.” So pray in the Spirit often, so that you are sensitive to Him and knows His heart.

Jude 1:20 *But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,*
1 Corinthians 14:4 *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.*

4. Examine yourself and confess your sins

Come before God in humility. Surrender yourself to Him. Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal sins in your life and ask God for forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Always keep short accounts with God, i.e. have a heart of repentance.

5. Offer prayer request for others and for yourself

Come before God to “give us today, our...” (Matthew 6:12), like Jesus taught the disciples. Ask God to give us the things we need for the coming day: food, health, friends, and support.

God cares for us and wants to look after us. Asking is not selfish as some Christians think. Asking puts us in a right relationship with God because it reminds us that without Him our needs will not be met. It also reminds us that everything we have and everything we are is God’s gift. When God answers our prayers, our faith would increase and our hearts would respond with thanksgiving.

God also wants us to pray for others. Be the bridge where God meets the needs of the people we are praying for. Remember that Jesus also intercedes for us (“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” Hebrews 7:25). So we need to ask Him what He

LESSON 3-PRACTICAL APPROACH TO PRAYER

Disciplining yourself to pray

is praying for the person and echo that prayer. He would reveal to us the true condition and gives us insight when we asked of Him.

6. Learn to wait upon the Lord

Psalm 37:34 *“Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.”*

Isaiah 40:31 *But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

We are surrounded by a society that cannot abide silence. Everywhere we go, we hear the noise of traffic, conversation, music - the list is endless. Many are afraid of being silent and also in the presence of God. Learn to focus on God by detaching our minds and hearts from the distractions around us.

7. Use a journal

Record or journalize your prayer requests on one side of your book and the thanksgiving on the other. Also, record impressions and words from God. Be deliberate also in testifying whenever God answers your prayers.

8. Make out prayer list

Make a list of different groups of people or events to pray for daily. There will be people whom you would pray for daily or when situation arises e.g. for yourself, your sheep, immediate leaders, people facing crisis/decision making. It might help to have a “Prayer Strategy”.

For example:

Monday:	Family
Tuesday:	Community
Wednesday:	Care group
Thursday:	Nation
Friday:	Church leaders
Saturday:	Hurting, need special prayers
Sunday:	Sunday Service

9. Have a prayer buddy

The advantage of such a spiritual partner is that each person can support the other in prayer and fellowship, with correction or encouragement when necessary. It should

LESSON 3-PRACTICAL APPROACH TO PRAYER

Disciplining yourself to pray

be someone of similar stature and gender. The church is a place where Christians can strengthen and assist one another.

A COMMON MODEL FOR DAILY PRAYER - ACTS

A way to start the daily pattern of prayer is to use this model. Many have found it helpful.

Adoration

Psalm 34:3 *Ob, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together.*

- We adore God for who He is, for the work that He has done for us on the Cross.
- We adore God because He has commanded us to do so, because He is worthy, He is the Creator of all things.

Confession

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- Acknowledging our sins before God.
- When we understand how sin can break the fellowship we have with God, we naturally desire to come back to Him.
- Thankfully, as Christian we can be cleansed by the blood of Jesus as we confess our sins.

Thanksgiving

Philippians 4:6 *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”*

The benefits of giving thanks are many:

- Causes us to acknowledge God’s existence, love and care.
- Reminds us of His goodness.
- Helps to shift our focus from what we don’t have to what we do have.

God’s people have every reason to be thankful, and to be known for abounding in thanksgiving. Colossians 1:12 says “giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to

LESSON 3-PRACTICAL APPROACH TO PRAYER

Disciplining yourself to pray

be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light..."

Supplication

Matthew 7:7-8 *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

We pray to God for our own and others' needs. We make our request known here. We should pray according to God's will, so that our prayers are answered (Mark 11:24).

SUMMARY

Besides daily prayer, also set aside time with God:

- Weekly, a longer period of time (about 2 hours)
- Yearly, a day or half a day

Jesus has such "desert time" alone where it is unhurried and fruitful. Nothing comes between you and God, not pagers, hand phones... He will honor your desire to draw closer to Him and make these times fruitful.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that praying is a waste of time since we may risk saying the wrong things? Why and why not?
2. What is your prayer posture like? How would you want to improve?
3. Who are in your prayer list? Is there anybody else you can include? Make a list of people or events you can pray for them,

LESSON 4-PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

The discipline of praying in tongues

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Definition

Use of Praying in the Spirit in our Prayer Life

Different Types of Tongues

How to be Baptized in The Holy Spirit

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only gives us the gift of prayer, He helps us to use this gift. He is able to do this because, as Jesus puts it, He is “the Counselor” (John 14:26). The word for “Counselor” which Jesus uses here also means an Advocate or a Comforter that is someone who knows how to help another person when they are in need. Romans 8:16 says “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” The Holy Spirit links our spirit with God Himself (Ephesians 2:18, John 4:23-24). He shows us the way to the Father. He is like the Friend who meets you at the door of a house and leads you into the Presence of the Owner.

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

It is praying in tongues. When a believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit, he/she receives the gift of tongues. This is the initial manifestation or sign of having being baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, Acts 10:45). The subsequent speaking in tongues is the constant filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-19). It is a separate and different experience from receiving the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion (John 20:22, Titus 3:5). At the time of conversion, having the Holy Spirit is like having water in a bottle. When we are Spirit baptized, the water overflows!

HOW DOES PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT HELP OUR PRAYER LIFE?**1. Enables us to exercise the power of God through the gifts of the Holy Spirit**

1 Corinthians 12:7 says, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.” We can ask God for spiritual gifts to build up the Body of Christ. God too in His grace gives us at times when we did not ask. Spiritual gifts, such as gift of knowledge, enable us to pray more effectively over the lives of people.

2. Increases our faith

Jude 1:20 says, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” It’s the same with God’s Word: when you read His Word

LESSON 4-PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

The discipline of praying in tongues

more, your faith increases (Romans 10:17). Both are spiritual input which yields spiritual results.

3. Enables us to pray without ceasing

We must pray not just in our place of prayer but when we are at school, work or at play, in church or with family or friends. God is always with us so we can communicate with Him anytime. Praying without ceasing means to be God-conscious always and dependent on Him.

4. Enables us to pray according to the will of God when we do not know how we ought to pray

Sometimes it is hard to know how to pray for others - particularly when their problems are big or when their "stories" are very sad, or it could be a crisis situation. We are limited in praying in our known language also. With the Holy Spirit, "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). So when we pray, we know that He is directing and interceding. Sometimes, He will put impressions in our mind to direct us to pray more specifically.

5. Edifies ourselves

1 Corinthians 14:4 says, "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself..." At times when we are discouraged, stressed or caught in a situation where we do not know what to do, praying in the Spirit encourages us. This is because we are tapping on Him. Our spirit man is strengthened.

6. Enables us to worship God by singing in tongues

In Colossians 3:16, Paul encourages the church to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Our worship is enhanced when we sing in the Spirit. Congregationally, we experience this during our praise and worship time. In your personal time, develop this habit too.

WHAT ARE SOME TYPES OF TONGUES?

This is a topic often questioned by many. Below is a brief summary.

1. Unknown tongue (1 Corinthians 14:2)

LESSON 4-PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT**The discipline of praying in tongues**

1 Corinthians 14:2 *For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

This is a personal tongue for personal edification. Only God knows the language. There is no need for interpretation. Most of us have this.

2. Known tongue (Acts 2:6-13, 1 Corinthians 14:23-25)

Acts 2:6-8 *And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? ⁸And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?"*

The person speaking does not know the language he is speaking, but the person listening understands it and knows that it is a known foreign language. This is a sign for unbelievers.

3. Worshipping or praising God in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 5:18-19)

1 Corinthians 14:26 *How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.*

Ephesians 5:18-19 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

This is called a spiritual song. The Bible exhorts us to sing in the spirit and to sing with our mind.

4. Tongues that requires interpretation (1 Corinthians 12:10)

1 Corinthians 12:10 *to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*

This is the spiritual gift of tongues that is mentioned together with the other nine spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, which is for the building up of the church. It is different from the gift of tongues received upon baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is for personal

LESSON 4-PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

The discipline of praying in tongues

edification. The former is exercised in public meetings in church, especially during worship. The person who speaks in tongues or someone in the midst who has the gift of interpretation can interpret.

HOW DO YOU RECEIVE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

This is covered more in depth in the Word For Life class for new believers.

1. Earnestly desire it (Matthew 7:7)

Matthew 7:7 *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."*

God sees the motives and desires of our hearts. He will not disappoint those who earnestly seek Him and His gifts.

2. Confess all sins (Acts 2:38)

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Sins (harboring bitterness, defying God...) prevent us from receiving from Him.

3. Exercise faith (Luke 11:13)

Luke 11:13 *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

Believe that when you ask Jesus, He would baptize you in the Holy Spirit and you will overflow in tongues. Speak aloud any syllables or words or sentences that come to your lips, even though they may sound babblish.

SUMMARY

Every believer should seek to be baptized in the Holy Spirit as it greatly enhances the prayer life. Prayer becomes more exciting and fulfilling as the Counselor guides and leads us!

LESSON 4-PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT
The discipline of praying in tongues

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? If not, would you like to receive it now?
2. What spiritual gifts do you possess? Pray for the class to receive at least one gift such as the gift of prophesy. Pair up and pray for each other using this gift.

LESSON 5-PRAYER AND FASTING

The “why” and different kinds of fasting

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Fasting in Relation to Praying
Why Fast?
Different Kinds of Fasting

WHAT IS FASTING?

The word “fast” is derived from the Hebrew term *tso*, which refers to the practice of self-denial. The New Testament uses the Greek word *nesteia* for the fast, which also has the same meaning.

Fasting is abstinence from food, sleep, physical intimacy (for married spouses) or any desire of the human nature for spiritual purposes. It helps us to keep focus and puts us to the test as to how much we desire to see God’s will be done. Fasting enables us to become overcomers, to increase our faith and to accomplish great things in the lives of others.

This discipline strengthens us spiritually and helps us overcome barriers that might keep us from living the victorious Christian life. Fasting can be carried out individually or corporately, as the purpose determines.

PURPOSES OF FASTING

1. To express personal repentance

John 3:5 says, “Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” We fast to express repentance and return to God (1 Samuel 7:6, Joel 2:12).

1 Samuel 7:6 *So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, “We have sinned against the LORD.” And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.*

Joel 2:12 *“Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”*

It is a time of mourning and chastening of our souls. It is a response to the prompting of the Holy Spirit through which we share a small measure of God’s grief over our sins.

The attitude of humility and brokenness is needed as we reconcile ourselves to God (Psalm 69:10). We allow Him to break the stubborn self-will and the fleshy appetites of the body.

LESSON 5-PRAYER AND FASTING

The “why” and different kinds of fasting

Psalm 69:10 *When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, That became my reproach.*

2. To strengthen person prayer

When we fast, God will give us the strength and focus to keep praying till we see our prayers answered (Daniel 9:3, Ezra 8:23). We may discover a greater desire to pray and our prayer lives become more effective.

Daniel 9:3 *Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.*

Ezra 8:23 *So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.*

3. To develop it as a regular habit

In Matthew 6:16, Jesus said: “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites...,” thus expecting all His disciples to fast regularly. We should develop this as part of our regular spiritual discipline. It is found that our body would be able to adjust quickly to a pattern of regular fasting. Be careful not to make this a legalistic bondage, but allow for changes in patterns of prayer and fasting as circumstances require or as the Holy Spirit directs.

4. To seek God’s guidance

We fast to ask God to reveal His direction and guidance for specific situations or decisions in our lives (Judges 20:26-28, Acts 14:23). God reveals to us through His Word, the prompting of the Holy Spirit or through other channels. It increases our spiritual awareness to God.

Judges 20:26-28 *Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. ²⁷ So the children of Israel inquired of the Lord (the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, ²⁸ and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, “Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?” And the Lord said, “Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand.”*

Acts 14:23 *So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*

The early church spent much time fasting for God to lead. In Acts 13:1-3, the Word says, “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and

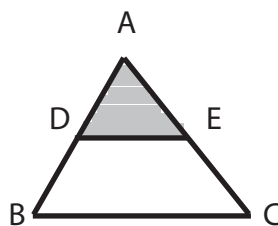
LESSON 5-PRAYER AND FASTING

The “why” and different kinds of fasting

teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.²As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”³Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” The Holy Spirit brought forth direction to another area of ministry within the church.

5. To increase ministry effectiveness

Like in many of Paul’s prayers, we fast and pray for ourselves to reach greater effectiveness for God.



Triangle ABC represents the complete will of God for every believer. The unshaded area DBCE represents the area of God’s will which may be appropriated by prayer without fasting. The smaller shaded triangle ADE represents the area of God’s will that can be appropriated only with prayer and fasting combined. If something is outside the triangle ABC, fasting will not make it inside. Many of God’s best provisions for His people lie within the shaded area and we often need to move into prayer and fasting combined.

6. We fast to overcome temptation.

1 Corinthians 9:27 *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

Fasting is a means by which we bring our body into subjection (1 Corinthians 9:27). It helps us to stand against any form of temptation; as fasting itself is a habit of abstinence from food, which is a physical temptation when we are hungry (Matthew 4:4-11). It breaks down the barriers in man’s carnal nature that stand in the way of the Holy Spirit so that He is able to work unhindered in His fullness through our prayer.

7. To seek God’s protection and deliverance

Just like how God has delivered the Israelites from dangers (Ezra 8:21, 2 Chronicles 20:2-3), God would do so as we turn to Him during such times of crisis. Such fasting is

LESSON 5-PRAYER AND FASTING

The “why” and different kinds of fasting

often accompanied by spiritual warfare as we claim His protection and victory in Jesus' Name.

2 Chronicles 20:2-3 *Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar” (which is En Gedi).³ And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.*

8. To know God more

Some of us may not have specific petitions but just want to draw closer to God and to be more sensitive to Him. It develops our attitude of constant dependency on Him.

(The lesson on Fasting II will cover this in more details.)

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF FASTING?

Without doubt, the benefits of fasting are many. We would find our faith and spiritual authority increasing. We are more victorious and bold as we build our confidence in Him. We become more sensitive of His presence and quick to repent. We find God directing our lives and ministry.

WHAT ARE SOME KINDS OF FASTING?

The seven most common kinds of fast are:

1. Normal fast

Abstaining from solid food for a definite period during which only liquid is taken (Matthew 4:2). The duration can be 1 day, 3 days, 1 month or 40 days. Extreme care should be taken with longer fasts and your physician should be consulted.

2. Partial fast

Abstaining from solid food for an extended part of the day, e.g. from 6am to 6pm. Only liquid is taken.

3. 1-Meal fast

Sacrifice one full meal a day, e.g. a lunch fast or dinner fast.

4. Daniel fast

Abstaining from meat and other favorite delicacies. Take only small portions of

LESSON 5-PRAYER AND FASTING

The “why” and different kinds of fasting

fresh fruit and vegetables. Daniel 1:12 says, “Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.” Besides Daniel, Elijah and John the Baptist also practiced this fast. Those with hypoglycemia or other diseases might consider this kind of fast.

5. Absolute fast

No food or drink is consumed in this fast. Generally, people who go for absolute fast has a very specific reason for doing so and it is usually not a personal one (Esther 4:16, Ezra 10:6). Moses and Jesus fasted for 40 days. Such fast should be short unless you are very certain God has called you and would sustain you for long periods.

Esther 4:16 *“Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”*

Ezra 10:6 *Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Jehobanan the son of Eliashib; and when he came there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he mourned because of the guilt of those from the captivity.*

6. Congregational or Corporate fast

A congregational fast is declared by the elders of the church when the congregation goes through a period of repentance or undertakes a major project and is seeking God for His favor and guidance.

7. Fasting from the things that distract

Besides fasting from food, fasting also refers to abstaining from things that distract, such as television, movies, internet, computer games, etc. so that we can focus ourselves on the purposes of God and the objectives of fasting.

Break fast gradually and wisely. For health reasons, you should consume small portions as you break fast, avoiding chili or acidic foods as much as possible. You can also break fast with a time of prayer or praise.

SUMMARY

Besides reaping spiritual benefits, fasting is also beneficial for the body. The spirit and the body are so interrelated in God’s creative design that fasting has both spiritual and physical benefits. As our bodies rest at night, our digestive systems are also taking a rest from food. It is appropriate that our first meal of the day is called break-fast.

Fasting helps unclog the system and eliminate poison. It is encouraging to know

LESSON 5-PRAYER AND FASTING

The “why” and different kinds of fasting

that the same God who designed the discipline of fasting designed our bodies to be benefited by periods of abstinence from food.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What would be your main purpose for fasting? Why is that so?
2. Evaluate your present fasting habit. What areas can you improve?

LESSON 6-THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

What intercession is

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Definition
Examples of Intercessory Prayer
Interceding For Others
Benefits

INTRODUCTION

There are 3 kinds of asking prayer: petitionary prayer, prayer of mediation and intercessory prayer. Petitionary prayer is what we are familiar with and has been covered in most of the lessons. This is prayer for our own needs and needs of people that we are directly connected. Philippians 4:6 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Prayer of mediation is between petitionary and intercessory prayer and is considered here as the latter.

In this lesson, we would cover basic intercessory prayer. More would be covered in a later lesson on Intercession. This lesson is for all Christians, and not only those who are called into the ministry of intercession. Those in this ministry are individuals or groups who have been called by God to commit themselves to regular and in-depth intercession as an expression of their Christian lives and ministry. This is sometimes accompanied by healing, prophecy and discernment of spirits.

WHAT IS INTERCESSION?

Intercession means "to pray, intervene, mediate, judge, to come between parties". Intercession therefore simply means to stand between man and God, to speak to God about man (Genesis 20:7, Numbers 2 1:7, 1 Samuel 12:23). It is to become a part of what God is doing. In intercession, we pray God's concerns and burdens, that is, to pray the heartbeat of God. In intercession, we also stand before Satan on behalf of others - to prevent his interference and influence in the lives of others. Intercession embraces far more numerous and diverse areas than petition.

Genesis 20:7 *Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."*

Numbers 21:7 *Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the*

LESSON 6—THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

What intercession is

serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

1 Samuel 12:23 *Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.*

Another important understanding is how intercession contributes to the total ministry of the body of Christ. Intercession is like the arm of the body, supporting the hand as it carries out the various tasks that it is called upon to perform. Any ministry undertaken by the Body of Christ or by individuals or groups within it is in need of support; it cannot function alone. The assistance of prayer is as practical as material support, in order that every undertaking is rooted in God, in His will, and would contribute to the building of His Kingdom. Therefore, though it is a “closet” ministry or one that’s not publicly seen, it is vital as “God’s work done in God’s way would reap God’s results”.

There are two aspects of intercession:

- Warfare
 - Facing Satan and demonic forces in the Name of Jesus on behalf of others
- Mediation or Travail

To come between, to meet, to pray, to entreat. It is facing the Father on behalf of others. It seeks to act as direct and also physical channels of God’s grace to them. For example, praying for physical or inner healing of someone.

ARE ALL CALLED TO INTERCEDE?

Yes, all are called to intercede on behalf of man, to different degrees. Some would pray more in this manner than others, reflecting the burden and personal development of their prayer life.

Every church should also have an intercessory team where intercessors come together to offer prayer jointly. Matthew 18:19-20 says, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” They may be called into being for a specific purpose (intercede for the nation) or a general one (as led to by God). This is covered in the other lesson. More would be covered in Intercession II. However, though such groups have many advantages, it does not negate the effectiveness of an individual who stands before the gap for people. “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another,

LESSON 6—THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

What intercession is

that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

WHAT ARE SOME TYPES OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER?

1. For the lost

It is vital that we intercede for the unsaved. We need to intercede for them, binding the powers of spiritual blindness, so that they will come to know Christ. At times, God moves us to weep and pray for His mercy upon them.

2. For specific people

They could be your leaders or specific people that you have burden for; either for a certain period of time or at length.

3. Corporate intercession

The church gathers together and pray for the anointing and protection of all leaders and members, including spiritual growth and maturity of all members. We also lift up to the Lord the ministry of our church and her fruitfulness. As a church, we come together once a quarter to intercede corporately.

4. National intercession

Praying for revival to come to a whole nation and seeing it come to know Christ. Also pray for prosperity, peace and righteous government. Intercede against evil and worldly influences that affect the lives of the people, such as materialism, sexual promiscuity, greed etc.

5. Prophetic intercession

Praying over people, things or events that God reveals to us as we listen to Him, so that the specific plans of God are fulfilled.

There are also the needs encountered in your own family and professional life. All of these are subjects of prayer that should not be neglected.

HOW TO INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS?

1. Identification

Hebrews 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

LESSON 6—THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

What intercession is

Hebrews 12:2 *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

This is to put aside our self-interests and bring the needs of others to God and take up their burdens, needs and suffering (Hebrews 12:2, Hebrews 2:9). It is also identifying yourself with the cause for which you intercede. We cannot pray effectively if we sit as dispassionate judges. Offer practical help when possible. Isaiah 53:4-12 says, "...Surely He has borne our grieves carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted ..."

2. Agony

Psalm 56:8 *You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?*

Isaiah 25:8 *He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the Lord has spoken.*

We share in the sufferings of Jesus by praying for others and suffering alongside with them in prayer (Psalm 56:8, Isaiah 25:8). Luke 22:44 says, "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

3. Authority

We exercise the authority and power of God over situations, powers of darkness and circumstances for the needs of others (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 11:28-33).

It is often more effective to accompany prayer with fasting so that the power of God is released in a greater measure as we pray. Fasting helps us to focus on the Spirit of God rather than our flesh.

BENEFITS OF INTERCESSION**1. Intercession builds a constant walk with God**

It is fellowshiping with God, realizing and understanding His cry, joy and heart. Intercession is being a co-worker with Christ.

2. Intercession will broaden your vision

It is looking at things from God's angle: it will enable you to look away from yourself

LESSON 6—THE PURPOSES OF A PRAYER

What intercession is

and into the world - getting a world vision (Zechariah 12:10 says, "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication ...") We will be changed and will find our needs provided for.

3. Intercession will build up our faith

Jude 1:20 *"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit"*

The more we pray, the more we will understand the spiritual realm and start seeing in the spirit. Seeing in the spirit is sensitivity to the things of God - we become more sensitive to God and the needs around us. We will be able to feel what the other person feels, the hurts and the needs.

4. We become a shareholder in what God is doing

We become a part of every soul saved, every miracle, every healing.

SUMMARY

Intercessory prayer is for every Christian and not only to those called into the ministry. Start by drawing up a list of people that you would begin intercessory with. God looks for people who are willing to stand in the gap.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. If you have not embarked on interceding for others, how can you practically start to develop it?
2. Why do you think intercessors sometimes weep when they pray?