

**Series: Praying Always
“What is Prayer?”
Ephesians 6:18**

Big Idea – Victory in spiritual warfare is impossible without prayer.

Definitions of Prayer

The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray. - Samuel Chadwick

Prayer is the hand that takes to ourselves the blessings that God has already provided in His Son. - R. A. Torrey

Prayer honors God, acknowledges His being, exalts His power, adores His providence, secures His aid. - E. M. Bounds

Prayer goes by faith into the great orchard of God’s exceeding great and precious promises, and with hand and heart picks the ripest and richest fruit. – E. M. Bounds

God’s child can conquer anything by prayer. Is it any wonder that Satan does his utmost to snatch that weapon from the Christian or to hinder him in the use of it? - Andrew Murray

Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers. (J. Sidlow Baxter)

What the Church needs today is not more or better machinery, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer. (E. M. Bounds)

Notice the 4 “alls” of prayer: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)

1. The Frequency of Prayer – “always”

The Jewish people in biblical times used to pray at certain times, somewhat like the Muslims do in their 5 set times of prayer. But the New Testament and new covenant brought a new era where we are praying at all times, on every occasion.

The Evidence for constant prayer:

Luke 18:1 – “...men ought always to pray and not lose heart.”

Luke 21:36 – “Watch therefore and pray always.”

Acts 6:4 – “We will give ourselves continually to prayer...”

Acts 10:2 – “Cornelius prayed to God always”

Romans 12:2 – “Continuing diligently in prayer.”

Colossians 4:2 – “Continue in prayer...”

1 Thessalonians 5:17 – “Pray without ceasing.”

2 Timothy 1:3 – “without ceasing...in my prayers night and day.”

The Meaning of constant prayer:

“Living your life in God-consciousness.”

When asked how much time he spent in prayer, George Mueller’s reply was, “Hours every day. But I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk and when I lie down and when I arise. And the answers are always coming.”

It is to be so God-conscious that we see everything in relation to Him.

If you see something good – Praise and thank Him for it.

If you see something evil – Ask Him to make it right.

If you see someone lost without Christ – Ask God to save them.

If you see trouble – Ask for God’s deliverance.

In other words, all of your life becomes an ascending prayer. This is the whole point of the believer’s life. 1 John 1:3 says that God saved you for fellowship, and there is no greater expression of fellowship than prayer.

The Stamina of constant prayer

Colossians 4:2 says we are to “continue in prayer” – word “continue” is the Greek word “*proskartareo*” meaning to hang in there with strength, to hold fast and not let go.

Jesus gave two examples of this in Luke.

Luke 18:1-8 is the story of the unjust judge and persistent woman who kept coming to him and begging him to avenge her. At first he refused her, but she wearied him with her persistence and he relented. Jesus said, “If an unjust judge will give something to a persistent lady, what do you think a just God will give to His children if they persist in prayer?”

Luke 11:5-11 is story of man with unexpected company in middle of the night. He had nothing to feed them with so he went to the store to get some bread but it’s closed. So he bangs on the door, tells the owner his problem but he’s in bed and doesn’t want to be disturbed. The man is persistent and keeps on knocking and because of his persistence the owner gets up and gives him the bread.

Luke 11:9 “So I tell you, ask, and God will give to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will open for you.

10 Yes, everyone who asks will receive. The one who searches will find. And everyone who knocks will have the door opened.”

The Variety of prayer – “all prayer and supplication”

Prayer – refers to prayer in general, conversation with God.

Supplication – special prayer stressing a specific need.

All – simply refers to all kinds of prayers.

Many forms – in public, in private in your prayer closet, verbally, silently, loud cries, quiet whispers, planned, spontaneously.

Posture ? – kneeling, standing, sitting, lifting up holy hands, lying prostrate on ground or floor...

Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:8 “I will that men pray everywhere.”

When is best time? Some preachers say you must pray in the morning because many passages say they “rose up early in the morning”. But what about Jesus who “continued all night in prayers” (Luke 6:12). Prayer is to be a way of life, all times are prayer times.

The Manner of prayer – “watching with all perseverance

Stick to it, be persistent in prayer.

Watching means being alert to the issues, what is happening around you. Jesus said “watch and pray” Mark 14:38

Pray specifically so God can answer specifically and He gets the glory

John 14:13 “And if you ask for anything in my name, I will do it for you so that the Father’s glory will be shown through the Son.”

Pray for others – watch implies looking outward rather than inward. Should spend much time in prayer looking out for the needs of others.

Selfishness kills this attitude of watchfulness.

Pray for spiritual issues, not just physical needs. Pray for souls saved, spiritual victories in people’s lives

The Indirect objects of our prayers – “all saints”

Paul always prayed for others before himself (Phil.1:4; Col. 1:3,4; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; Philemon 4,5)

“God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.”
1 Samuel 12:23

The Qualification for prayer – “in the Spirit”

What it means to pray “in the Spirit”

Meaning? – not tongues speaking. It’s praying in concert with the Spirit who is making intercession for us (Romans 8:26)

It is worthy of note that the Spirit’s assistance in prayer is more frequently mentioned than any of His other offices. All true praying springs from His activity in the heart. Both Paul and Jude teach that effective prayer is “praying in the Holy Spirit,” which has been defined as praying “along the same lines, about the same things, in the same Name as the Holy Spirit.” All true prayer rises in the spirit of the believer from the Spirit who indwells him.

Praying in the Spirit might mean praying *in the realm of the Holy Spirit*, for He is the sphere and atmosphere of the believer's life. The Spirit is in us and we are in the Spirit. Many prayers are psychical rather than spiritual. They move in the realm of the mind only, and are the product of our own thinking and not of the Spirit's teaching. But praying in the Spirit is something deeper. The prayer envisaged here "utilizes the body and demands the cooperation of the mind, but moves in the supernatural realm of the Spirit." Prayer conducts its business in the heavenlies.

Or it may mean praying *in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit*: "Give yourselves wholly to prayer and entreaty; pray on every occasion in the power of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18, NEB). Prayer demands more than human power and energy for its supernatural task, and the Holy Spirit supplies it. He is the Spirit of power as well as the Spirit of prayer. Mere human energy of heart and mind and will can achieve only human results. But praying in the power of the Spirit releases supernatural resources.

It is the Spirit's delight to aid us in our physical and moral weakness in the prayer life, for the praying heart labors under 3 limiting handicaps; but in each of them we can count on the Spirit's assistance.

Sometimes we are kept from prayer because of the conscious *iniquity of our hearts*. The Spirit will lead and enable us to appropriate the cleansing of the blood of Christ which will silence the accusations of the adversary and remove the sense of guilt and pollution.

Always we are hampered by the limiting *ignorance of our minds*. The Spirit who knows the mind of God will share that knowledge with us as we wait on Him. Then there will come the quiet, clear conviction that our request is in the will of God, and faith will be kindled.

We are often earthbound through the numbing *infirmity of our bodies*. The Spirit will quicken our mortal bodies in response to our faith and enable us to rise above physical and climatic conditions.

J. Oswald Sanders, *Cultivation of Christian Character*, (Moody Press, Chicago; 1965), pp. 105-107