

Spiritual Trainer Series

*Life of
Prayer*

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Life of Prayer

*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray
and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.*

(Psalm 55:17 KJV)

Four things let us ever keep in mind:

God hears prayer,
God heeds prayer,
God answers prayer, and
God delivers by prayer.

- E. M. Bounds

What are Some of the Promises of Prayer?

A Truth: God is never more than a prayer away.

- 1. God promises salvation to all who ask Him for it in Jesus' name.** Living in eternity with God is a gift to those who tell Him that they believe in His Son, Jesus Christ.

*For everyone who calls on the name
of the LORD will be saved.*

(Romans 10:13)

- 2. God promises to relieve your anxieties.** He says to bring all your cares to Him, because He loves you and wants to give you peace.

Cast all your anxiety on Him for he cares for you.
(1 Peter 5:7)

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything,
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your
requests to God. And the peace of God, which
transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts
and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
(Philippians 4:6-7)

- ❖ What prayer has God answered for you (even if it wasn't the answer you hoped for)?

3. God promises that prayer provides the way out of personal temptation.


*Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.
The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.*
(Matthew 26:41)

- ❖ Which one of God's promises about prayer gives you the most encouragement or hope?

Getting to the Heart of The Matter About Praying

Prayer is a private conversation with God that includes talking and listening, just like you would interact with a friend! Jesus emphasizes the privacy and intimacy of prayer by saying,

*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites,
for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on
the street corners to be seen by men.*
(Matthew 6:5a)

-  Read all of Matthew 6:5-8 to hear Jesus' heart on this matter of prayer.
- ❖ What did you learn (or notice again) about prayer from this passage?

What is the Purpose of Prayer?

"Prayer does not fit us for the greater works; prayer is the greater work."


- Oswald Chambers

1. **To adore and worship God** because your prayers bring pleasure to Him.

...the prayer of the upright is His delight.
(Proverbs 15:8 NASB)

2. **To confess your faults** by admitting your imperfection and acknowledging His power to forgive your faults.

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins,
he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
(1 John 1:9)

-  Read the last line again, focusing on the words "will forgive" and "purify."

❖ How does that promise make you feel?

- 3. To express your thanks** and develop an attitude of gratitude.

*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks
in all circumstances, for this is God's will
for you in Christ Jesus.
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

- 4. To ask Him to help you and others** in every way.

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession
and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all
those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet
lives in all godliness and holiness.
(1 Timothy 2:1-2)*

Memory Tip: ACTS of Praying

A doration:	Worship God.
C onfession:	Name your faults.
T hanksgiving:	Express gratitude.
S upplication:	Ask God for help.

- ❖ Prayer is your direct access to God to be able to communicate with Him. Which one of the four purposes of talking with God (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, or Supplication) is hardest for you? Which is the easiest for you?

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Why Should I Pray?


The reasons you should pray don't include guilt or obligation!
You should pray because...

1. **God wants you to!** He desires an ongoing relationship with you during which you get to know and trust Him more every day.

Pray without ceasing.
(1 Thessalonians 5:17 NASB)

- ❖ How do you feel about praying unceasingly—all day long—while driving, doing the dishes, before meetings and projects, in crises, when exercising, etc.?
2. **Jesus modeled it.** Jesus was a man of prayer. He understood His own need to pray to the Father with whom He fellowshiped and from whom He received direction. On at least eleven different occasions, He taught lessons on prayer. He prayed **in the morning, at night, alone, with others, and at public gatherings**. Jesus prayed intently before making major decisions and when He faced personal crises. He understood the power of prayer.

*Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray,
and spent the night praying to God.*
(Luke 9:18)

-  Even Jesus' final words here on earth were a prayer. Read Luke 23:46.

How Should I Pray?

It is important to...

- **Be yourself.** Use everyday words, not some artificial language with *thou* and *thee*.
- **Be bold.** Don't be afraid to ask your loving Father for what you specifically need.

In addition to those general guidelines, Jesus shared a great prayer model in Matthew 6:9-13 (below) about what to include in your conversation with God:

The Lord's Prayer

How You Should Pray

Call God your "Father"
Praise His Name; adore Him
Want His kingdom to come now
Desire His will

Rely on Him for His provisions
Confess your sins
Forgive others

Ask to avoid temptation

Ask for protection

Biblical Basis

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven
our debtors.
And lead us not
into temptation,
but deliver us from
the evil one.*

- ❖ What do you find interesting or helpful about one of the prayer topics Jesus mentioned?

A Sinner's Prayer!

Dear God,
So far today I've done all right.
I haven't gossiped.
I haven't lost my temper.
I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or overindulgent.
I'm very thankful for that.
But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed;
And from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help.
Amen.

What Prevents Answers to Prayer?

1. Unconfessed sin in your life

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.
(Mark 11:25)

- ❖ Do you want to pray to confess a sin right now? If so, simply say, "Heavenly Father, please forgive me for my sin of _____ and help me live in a way that reflects a real change of my heart. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen"

2. Selfish requests

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
(James 4:3)

3. Desires that do not fulfill God's purpose for your life

*And we know that in all things God works
for the good of those who love Him, who have
been called according to His purpose.*
(Romans 8:28)

4. Lack of faith (doubt)

*He [Jesus] replied, "If you have faith as small as a
mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree,
'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,'
and it will obey you."*
(Luke 17:6)

- ❖ Think about one of your prayer requests that was not answered the way you wanted it to be answered. In hindsight, why do you think that happened?

Call to Action

Prayer: Ask Jesus to teach you to pray unceasingly throughout the day, keeping your eyes on Him. Thank Him for being such a good role model in how passionately He prayed. Ask Him to let you see evidence of what prayer will do in your life. Pray this Scripture and be reminded of the importance of praying with/for other believers:

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.
(Colossians 4:12-13)

Circle one or two of the Action Steps below that you will take:

1. Identify one of the greatest obstacles, struggles, or challenges in your life and commit to praying about God's will in that area for _____
(specific amount of time: 1 week, 1 month).
2. Choose a Prayer Partner and decide on a regular "reporting-in" time for prayer requests and praise reports.

Partner's Name _____

Phone _____

Meeting Time/Place _____

3. Keep a prayer journal of your prayer requests and praise reports.
4. Read the "Spiritual Trainer Challenge" on page 11 to see if you are being prompted by the Holy Spirit to disciple someone on this topic of prayer.

Great Resources

Deepening Your Conversation with God by Ben Patterson
(Minneapolis: Bethany House) 2001.

Patterson's attitude of "I've been there too" will encourage and inspire you to turn your prayers from a spiritual discipline to a much-anticipated delight. In this want-to-pray guide, he describes prayer as the work of the Christian, explaining why God loves your prayers and how praying gets God's work done on earth.

Power of Prayer Small Group Video Curriculum (Lake Forest: Saddleback Church) 2002.

Do you have a difficult time with prayer? Do you find yourself asking, "Do my prayers really make a difference?" Do you wonder, "Is there anything we can do to change, really change the world we live in?" This study makes a case for prayer as one of the most central and radical things we can do to bring about social, political, and spiritual change in the world. Prayer is the ultimate interference to the status quo in our world and in our lives. Your personal prayer life and the place of prayer in your small group life will never be the same after this exciting study. Available at the weekend patio table or from Saddleback's Maturity Team.

Spiritual Trainer Challenge

Is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to be a Spiritual Trainer to another Christian in the area of prayer? Is someone in your family, small group, or ministry ready to take the next step in his or her spiritual walk? Would you like to share this booklet with a parent, child, sibling, friend, neighbor, or co-worker? If so, here are simple steps you can take:

Things You Can Do to Prayerfully Prepare for a Spiritual Training Appointment

1. Pick up a copy of *Life Training: Spiritual Habits* and read through it. This booklet will give you a good understanding of why it is important to develop spiritual habits like time alone with God, confession and repentance, prayer, Scripture memorization, worship, contentment, praying the names of God, etc. It will also give you some excellent advice on how to be a great trainer/discipler.
2. Ask someone if he/she (same-sex as yourself, unless it is a family member or your fiancé) would like you to disciple him/her using this booklet, *Life of Prayer*. Pick up a copy for that person. Set a date and time for a one-hour meeting—with a reminder to bring a Bible.
3. Re-read this booklet, *Life of Prayer*, paying special attention to how it is organized and what sections helped you the most.

Things to Do During the Appointment

Important Note: This lesson has six sections, each of which will take approximately six minutes. So, you will probably need 36 minutes to cover the content of the lesson. **Please allow 50-60 minutes for the entire discipleship session, including fellowship and prayer requests.**

1. Open with a brief prayer and a few minutes of fellowship.
2. Read through the booklet with your trainee, taking turns sharing the reading. Ask your trainee the questions as you move through the material. Take your time; don't rush.
3. For the “Call to Action” section, slow the pace as you pray, answer any questions, and discuss the action steps.

Notes:

[illegible]

Thank you for using the Saddleback Church Spiritual Trainer Series materials entitled *Life of Prayer*. We hope that this has been a beneficial experience and has provided you with an opportunity to draw closer to God.

If you are interested in exploring more of the Saddleback Spiritual Trainer Series tools, please call the Maturity Team at Saddleback Church, (949) 609-8201.
www.saddleback.com/maturity