
Relationship in Action

How to Have a Meaningful, Daily Holy Hour with God

"It happened while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of his disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'
(Luke 11:1)

"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

Why Pray?

Do you desire to have a deeper life? Do you get your prayers answered? According to a recent survey, most Christians spend five minutes or less each day in prayer.

Do you even have a prayer life? If your answer is "Sometimes," "I don't know," or "No," maybe you are not convinced of the importance of prayer.

Why pray?

God's Word commands it. (Isa. 55:6; Luke 18:1; Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8; 1 John 5:14-15)

But why pray?

1. We need to.
2. There is a devil.
3. It is God's appointed way for obtaining things.

4. It was important to Jesus.
5. Prayer accomplishes great things.

“What a man is, he is alone on his knees before God, and no more.”
– Robert Murray McCheyne

Some say, “But I don’t know how to pray.” We need to learn to pray. We don’t learn to pray by reading about prayer or hearing sermons on prayer, but by praying.

“The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing; but it is the chief thing. The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray.”

– S. D. Gordon

What Is Prayer?

D. L. Moody was once addressing a crowded meeting of children in Scotland, and in order to get their attention, he asked, “What is prayer?”

He expected no answer, but scores of hands were raised. One little boy answered quickly and precisely: **“Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confessions of our sins and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.”**

Moody was pleasantly surprised.

But I wonder how many Christians today could give that kind of definition of prayer? What would you say? What does prayer mean to you?

Most Christians would simply say, “Prayer is asking things from God.” Prayer is not just a way to get things from God, but rather a way to get to know God personally, intimately.

Prayer is communion with God . . .

prayer is a sense of God’s presence . . .

prayer is turning the soul to God (Psalm 25:1) . . .

prayer is loving God . . .

prayer is knowing God.

“Prayer is the channel through which *all good flows to men.*

Prayer is a **privilege, a sacred, princely privilege. Prayer is a duty, an obligation most binding and most imperative, which should hold us to it.**

But prayer is more than a privilege, more than duty. It is **the appointed condition of getting God’s aid. It is the avenue through which**

God supplies man’s wants.”

– E.M. Bounds

Prayer is asking. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Matt. 7:7-8).

What Is Prayerlessness?

A person that prays not at all, ever, needs to be saved.

Prayerlessness is that state where one prays . . .

Less than he ought

Less than the Father desires

Less than he knows he should

Prayerlessness is a sin, not just a weakness, because . . .

1. The Bible plainly calls it that (1 Sam. 12:23).
2. Many, many Scriptures command Christians to pray (1 Thess. 5:17; Luke 18:1; Eph. 6:18).
3. It leaves the door open for all other sin (Mark 14:38).

A sin can only be dealt with by confession, repentance, forgiveness, and cleansing.

Why Don't We Get Our Prayers Answered?

We don't get our prayers answered because . . .

1. **We don't pray.**

"You do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2).

2. **We pray selfishly.**

"You ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3).

3. **We pray for show.**

Pharisees (Matt. 6:5-7)

4. **We give up too soon.**

Parable (Luke 11:5-10)

5. **We don't qualify.**

"The effective prayer of a righteous man . . ." (James 5:16).

6. **We have unconfessed sin.**

"If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalm 66:18).

7. **We aren't diligent.**

Fervent (James 5:16 KJV)

8. **We don't expect to get prayers answered.**

"It shall be done to you according to your faith" (Matt. 9:29).

How to Have a Holy Hour

1. Confession

Sin is the greatest roadblock to prayer; early in your prayer time, confess—agree with God about your sin (Psalm 139:23-24; 51:10-11; 1 John 1:9).

2. Praise

The next step is praise—praising God for who and what He is (Psalm 63:3; 34:1-3).

- a. Goodness
- b. Patience
- c. Love
- d. Wisdom
- e. Greatness
- f. Knowledge
- g. Power
- h. Holiness
- i. Glory
- j. Grace

3. Waiting

The first step is quieting your mind and heart before God (Psalm 37:7; Isaiah 40:31), replacing any distractions of your life or the world around you with a reverential focus on the majesty and authority of God. Take a few moments to be quiet in God's presence, letting your mind be filled with thoughts of Him.

4. The Word

This fourth stage involves God's Word. When we pray, we are speaking to God. When we read God's Word, God is speaking to us. Open your Bible, asking God to bless the reading of the Word with concentration and understanding. Remember, this Bible reading is not for the purpose of preparing to teach or

preach to others, but for preparation in prayer (2 Tim. 3:16; Psalm 19:7-8).

5. Intercession/Supplication

At this point you are ready to come boldly into God's presence with intercession and supplication. Intercession is praying for others. It is unselfish. Intercession is love on its knees. You should have a list of names of others to uphold in prayer. Supplication is urgent praying for others (1 Tim. 2:1-2; Psalm 2:8).

6. Petition

Petition is asking God for self. There is nothing wrong with asking God for personal needs. "Ask, and it will be given to you." Make a list of all your personal needs, and check them off as God answers prayer (Matt. 7:7; James 4:2).

7. Thanksgiving

At this point it is important to thank God. What is the difference between thanksgiving and praise? Praise is pouring out the heart in adoration to God, while thanksgiving is simply enumerating those things for which we are grateful. We need to thank God for what He has done (Phil. 4:6; Psalm 100:4).

- a. Material possessions
- b. Physical blessings
- c. Spiritual blessings
- d. People

8. Singing

The next step in your hour with God is singing. (This is why you might wish to be alone.) Singing Scripture back to the Lord is one of the highest forms of

worship and praise. There are many songs in the hymnal that may be sung to the Lord (Psalm 100:2; Eph. 5:19).

9. **Meditation**

Meditation is actively pondering and digesting an aspect of spiritual truth, such as a passage of Scripture or a character trait of God (Josh. 1:8; Psalm 1:1-2).

10. **Listening**

Listen for that still small voice of God; wait for specific orders concerning activities of the day (Eccl. 5:2; 1 Kings 19:11-12; Psalm 46:10).

11. **Psalms**

Earlier in your prayer time you read the Word and allowed God to speak to you. Now pray the Word back to God. The book of Psalms is full of personal prayers (Psalm 95:2; 147:1).

12. **Praise**

You begin your prayer time with praise and end your prayer time with praise. This step is extremely important (Psalm 150:1-2; 50:23).

We wish to express appreciation to Dick Eastman, who originally suggested this approach to prayer in his book The Hour That Changed the World.
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