

## The Dynamics of Prayer

### Matthew 6:5 through Matthew 6:13 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup>“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>6</sup>But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. <sup>7</sup>And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

<sup>8</sup>“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. <sup>9</sup>In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On earth as *it is* in heaven.  
<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.  
<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
<sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus takes time to teach on prayer. Traditionally we call this prayer the Lord’s Prayer. I believe that it may more accurately be called the Model Prayer because it is an example of how to pray.

The prayer that the Lord actually prayed is found in John 17. There he prays for the disciples and the church. It is a prayer that includes his disciples in this time also.

But the Model Prayer gives us everything we need to be successful in our prayer lives. It reveals the recipient of our prayers, the purpose of our prayers, and much more.

For the five Sundays in May, we will use the Model Prayer as a backdrop for our discussions on prayer. Our goal is to help every believer strengthen their prayers and grow in their relationships with God.

## Introduction:

As Jesus begins to teach the model prayer, he begins with a statement that is new to his hearers. He says “our Father in heaven.” Before this time prayer was not addressed to God as “Father”. In fact it was considered blasphemy to address God as Father because it meant you claimed to be his Son.

Jesus knew that our spiritual conditions would change as a result of his crucifixion and resurrection. We would become sons and daughters of the most high God.

This address that Jesus gives not only identifies us with the Father, but brings the entire godhead into the discussion. When we talk about the godhead, we are talking about the Holy Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God has manifested himself in three persons in scripture much like water can be manifested as a solid, liquid, and vapor.

To better understand prayer, we need to see the dynamics of how the distinct functions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit operate in our prayers. So we will begin today with the Dynamics of Prayer. We will talk about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and conclude for the day.

## The Father

### **John 16:22 through John 16:28 (NKJV)**

<sup>22</sup>Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

<sup>23</sup>“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. <sup>24</sup>Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

<sup>25</sup>“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. <sup>26</sup>In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; <sup>27</sup>for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. <sup>28</sup>I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

In this passage Jesus is talking about his crucifixion and resurrection. He is getting his disciples ready for the trial that they would face as a result of his death. He tells them “a little while and you won’t see me, and again, a little while and you will see me because I go to the Father.”

Jesus says in that day (after his resurrection) things would change. He said they would ask him nothing. Instead, they would ask the Father directly for whatever they needed.

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. It signified the access we were given to God himself. We did not need a priest to go to God for us.

Jesus even says when we pray, he is not going to be a “go between” for us. He says we can ask what we want **in his name**, but that doesn’t mean he is going to be the one asking for us. He says God the Father himself loves us. God the Father will answer us himself.

God is God. We pray to God. We do not pray to Mary. We do not pray to deceased loved ones. We do not pray to the little baby Jesus in the manger. We do not pray to cross. We do not pray to the picture of Jesus in our homes. We don’t pray to statues.

God is God. He is a Spirit. There is nothing in this earth like him. He is holy and set apart. He is the object of all of our prayers.

*“We pray to the Father.”*

We pray to God who is identified in the scriptures. We pray to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We pray to God who is the creator of the heavens and the earth. We pray to God who sits high and looks low.

## **The Son**

Jesus was sent to save us from our sins. He died on the cross to redeem mankind and bring us back to God. If we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved.

Jesus gives us access to God. The book of Hebrews says we pass through the veil of his flesh. Jesus himself makes a way for us. Jesus himself said in John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Jesus therefore became our authorizing agent. So throughout chapters 14-17 Jesus repeatedly says, whatever we ask **IN HIS NAME** would be done for us. Without Jesus’ authorization, our prayers don’t reach heaven.

*Car Accident Example:*

Recently, I had a car accident and needed our truck to be repaired. The insurance company of the person who hit me assigned me an agent who was responsible for approving the work to be done.

When the work was completed, the body shop wanted their money and called the insurance company. They couldn't get the money because only the assigned agent could authorize the check and they were out of the office.

Insurance companies have to have an authorizing agent to look over the estimate to make sure there is no insurance fraud. Prayer is a lot like that.

God has the ability to answer prayer. Jesus is mankind's authorizing agent. If we pray without the authority of Jesus Christ, we cannot expect an answer from heaven. Jesus said, in John 14:13

**John 14:13 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup>And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

*"We pray to the Father, in the name of Jesus."*

Jesus isn't authorizing everything we send him. Some of us are guilty of "prayer fraud". We keep submitting these estimates for what we want and Jesus won't sign off on it.

I remember how kids used to get the JC Penny holiday catalog and spend hours marking all the stuff they wanted. They would even turn down the pages so their parents could easily find their Christmas wish list.

And we all know they weren't getting all of that stuff. You can mark it up, fold it down, holler, scream, and shout, but Jesus is not signing off on your foolishness. He said his name is only good if what we are doing will cause the Father to be glorified in the Son.

That's why the model prayer ends with "Amen." Amen means to be sure, faithful, trustworthy, it means so it is or so be it, it means to be true. At the end of your prayer, you are saying this prayer I have prayed is true. It is trustworthy. It is faithful. So it is.

In the book of Revelations Jesus calls himself the Amen. So if our prayers are not trustworthy we can't expect an answer from God.

**The Holy Spirit**

Hebrews tells us that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God because his work as priest was complete. Jesus isn't coming back until we all see him in the clouds. This is important because when the disciples needed miracles or power, Jesus was with them to do miracles and answer questions, and give them guidance.

Now that Jesus was going to the Father to sit on his throne, who was actually going to do the miraculous work?

### **John 14:15 through John 14:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup>"If you love Me, keep My commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—<sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Jesus says "I won't be here, but I'm sending someone just like me to abide with you forever." It's the Holy Spirit.

#### *Car Accident Example 2:*

When the body shop needed their money for the work they had done, we had to find the agent to authorize the check. But the agent didn't print and mail the check. Someone else handled the distribution of the check.

So we have a company, with an authorizing agent, who approves the check request and hands it off to the finance department to distribute the funds.

We have a head (God), an arm (Jesus), and a hand (the Holy Spirit) that does the work.

### **John 14:26 (NKJV)**

<sup>26</sup>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.

The Holy Spirit will be sent in his name.

*"We pray to the Father, in the name of Jesus, and he answers through the Holy Spirit."*

Our prayers are answered in the spirit by the Spirit. Our prayers take place in the spirit. Prayer is a spiritual exercise. That's why we close our eyes and bow our heads in prayer. It's to help us focus on the spirit world and not be distracted by the physical world.

I watch the DVD's from the services and it never fails that prayer is going on and some of us are looking around. The only ones who should be looking around are the ushers and the musicians. But some of us just have to see what's going on.

What we are really saying is we don't want to pray. We don't want to do the spiritual exercise of prayer. Prayer is a reverent time. It is the moment when we are all transported into the throne room of God. We are transported from the natural world into the spiritual world. Our prayers are answered in the spirit and manifested in the physical.

If we want something to happen in the physical world, we must birth it in the spirit. So prayer is not a physical exercise.

Prayer is not limited to this building. (house, car, grocery store)

Prayer is not an action that can only be carried out by a chosen few. (we can all pray)

Prayer is not restricted to a specific time of day. (morning, noon, or night)

Prayer is not subject to mankind's rules. (Pray on the job or in schools)

Prayer doesn't have to end with our words. (God is speaking too)

Prayer doesn't have a certain style. (public vs. private)

Prayer is not situational. (we pray in good and bad times)

When we open our mouths and call on the Lord, he hears us. Even if we pray silently like Hannah in 1 Samuel, God hears us. Prayer is not just about words. Jesus said there are some people who believe they will be heard by the number of their words. Prayer isn't limited to just what we say because God knows our needs before we ask. Prayer is about spirit and heart and truth.

Prayer is about relationship. Prayer brings God's power. Prayer can deliver us. Prayer can save the sick. Prayer can heal the broken hearted. Prayer can help us overcome obstacles. Prayer can break the yoke of addictions. Prayer can cover us. Prayer is our direct connection to God.

### **Conclusion:**

When we pray, we must have faith that God the Father is able to answer our prayers. At the same time we must understand that our access to God and the answers to our prayers are conditioned upon the name of Jesus. When God is ready to dispatch an answer, it will be done by the Holy Spirit.