

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; One of the outstanding duties, privileges and joys of the Christian life is the opportunity to share our thoughts and aspirations with God our Father, we call this prayer.

We should never forget how important it is for us to speak with Him. For it is His desire that we His children talk to Him.

In Heb 4:16; He reminds us that we have the privilege to:"come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in time of need."

In Jam 5:16; It will give us joy to know – "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results."

If we are in a good relationship with Him, we will be able to talk to Him all the time.

Just as a fish swims and a bird flies, so a Christian ought to pray.

Prayer is a privilege which cost the Christ Jesus
His life blood to make possible.
It is also a responsibility
which if we neglect, we will be the loser.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; DEFINITION. What is prayer? Simply talking to God and more. It is also communing with God. "Taking time to contemplate / meditate as well as speaking" We do not need a special language to approach Him.

FORMS OF PRAYER. There are 5 main purposes in prayer.

- 1. Thanksgiving and praise.
 - 2. Request or petition.
- 3. Supplication or intercession.
 - 4. Confession.
 - 5. Meditation.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42;

1. THANKS GIVING / PRAISE OR SUPPLICATION!

This is often neglected.

We are too busy saying 'give me' that we forget to say 'thank you.'

Everything we have is a gift, - so we've got a lot to be thankful for. We can praise God for what He is, as well as for what He has done.

Psa 104:1; Psa 148;

"Bless the LORD, my soul! LORD, my God, you are great indeed! You are clothed with majesty and glory."

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; 2. REQUEST or PETITION!

By this we mean asking for things for ourselves. Jam 4:2; says:- "you do not have because you do not ask" That's simple - but often so true.

Look at some of the promises to those who ask!
1. Matt 7:7-11; (also Lk 11:9-13;)
2. Phil 4:6;

Matt 7:7-8;. "Keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened.

8. For everyone who asks, receives.

Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks."

Phil 4:6; "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done."

"7. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR BECAUSE YOU JUST MIGHT GET IT!

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; 3. SUPPLICATION AND INTERCESSION!

Supplication is a general word and means to ask earnestly for something in prayer either for self or others. Intercession is a petition on behalf of others.

This is an important part of prayer.

Our prayers can so easily become selfish.

It is good to spend more time praying for others than ourselves.

How is intercession for others effective?

a) If we are praying along with that person or people, we are interceding for them, our prayers are re-enforcing their own.

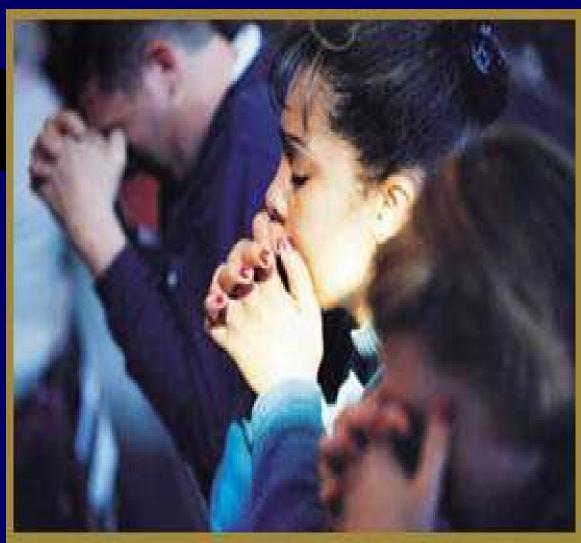
- b) If we are praying for people who do not pray that same prayer themselves, either because they do not know they need to or because they are not Christians, then God can answer our prayers by:
 - a. Giving us the opportunity to help them. b. Bring about situations in their life whereby they will be faced with what we are praying for.

Paul is a tremendous example here.
Note some of the times he prays for others:Rom 9:1-2; 10:1; 1 Cor 1:4; Eph 1:16; Col 1:3; 2:1;
1 Thess 1:2; 2 Thess 1:11; 2 Tim 1:3; Phil 4;

Praying For Others And Knowing Others Are Praying For US Is Very Important To our Faithfulness.

God Wants us to depend on Prayer





God says that Prayer has great Power! Jam 5:13-16; "Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise"

"Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the congregation to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven."

"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."

c) NOTE everyone has a free will and can accept or reject any help, they must make the final decision, but our prayers can help.

4. CONFESSION! We cannot hide from God.: He knows our every thought. If we are to face God, we must be open about our sins.

Sins can be a barrier between ourselves and God.

Only as we confess our sins can we have them forgiven 1 Jn 1:9; This confession must be specific. Not merely, "Father I am a sinner - forgive me."

We need to try to openly lay each our sins before God.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; 5. MEDITATION!

This should underline all our prayer life. Prayer must be offered thoughtfully and conscious of the presence of God.

To think on Him, as well as on what we are saying.

Some have called it submission.

We open ourselves up before God.

Lay ourselves bare in His presence.

In this sense, it is the thumb that holds the other fingers of prayer.
Yet meditation can be a separate form of prayer.

When we don't go before God to ask or thank, but simply to look on Him to spend time in His presence and think on His greatness.

This is not the easiest form of prayer, for our minds wander so easily.

But it is one of the highest forms.

Real communion with God, that spills over into the whole of our lives.

Knowing God is the centre of everything, doing His will comes naturally from that.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; HOW TO PRAY?

There is no set form for speaking to God, No mechanics that must be gone through. From the lowliest to the highest prayer is possible.

It is simply talking to God, communicating with God.

But after saying this we need to realise
that not everyone prays to God correctly.

Many prayers never get higher than the ceiling.

Not because the form is wrong,
but because the heart is wrong.

If our prayers are to be effective,
there must be certain attitudes we must have.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; The first and foremost is 'FAITH' We must 'BELIEVE' (faith and belief are the same word -noun and verb) Heb 11:6;

The unbelief that is common today does not involve a denial of God's existence, nor the fact that God answers prayer.

All who are Christians would agree to this.

But what about my specific prayer.

Do we really have faith that God will answer it?
It is easy to be general and vague, but we need
to confront ourselves with the fact that God is real,
He is a living God, who acts and does things,
and my prayer can change things.
This is tremendous and we need to believe it.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; Prayer and faith go together, without faith it is impossible to pray effectively. We can pray, believe, and receive, or pray and doubt and do without. Lets look at some passages of scripture

James 1:5; "If you need wisdom! If you want to know what God wants you to do-ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking."

that demonstrate this.

6. "But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to answer, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind."

- 7. "People like that should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.
- 8. They can't make up their minds.
 They waver back and forth in everything they do."
 In praying for wisdom we need faith.

Jesus to His Disciples:-

Matt 21:21-22; "Then Jesus told them, "I assure you, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, 'May God lift you up and throw you into the sea,' and it will happen.

22. If you believe, you will receive."

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; see Mark 11:22-24; also Remember Jesus in Gethsemane "Your will be done."

Our lack of faith is the greatest source of ineffectiveness in our prayers.

There is no limit to God's supply. The only limit is a persons faith that connects Jesus power to Him.

Matt 8:13; - The Centurion's faith.

Matt 15:24-28; The faith of the Gentile woman.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; HOW SHOULD WE ASK?

1). SPECIFICALLY - Everything is important to God. For every decision you make, however small, either leads you closer to God or further away from Him.

So it is important! ask God about it first.

Don't always offer general prayer.

Be specific, pray for people.

NOT those who are sick among us BUT Help Jack to get better he has the flu!

"There is nothing too great for God's power, and nothing too small for His fatherly care."

- 2) ASK REPEATEDLY Be persistent in prayer. If I just asked my dad once for something and never brought it up again, he would think it was a fad, and not worry about it. Lk 11:5-8; Lk 18:1-8;
 - 3) ASK FOR GOD'S WILL NOT YOUR OWN We need to ask with a realization that often we do not know what is best for us.

So we should pray -"This is what I want – but not my will but your will be done."

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42;

Pray with HUMILITY - yet Boldly.

This is one of many of the paradoxes in the Christian life. Someone may ask,

"how can you be humble and bold at the same time?" Let us look at these requirements:-

HUMBLY.

When we speak about being humble in prayer, we think of the story of the Pharisee and the Publican praying in the Temple. Lk 18:9-14;

The Pharisee was arrogant and proud. He reminded God of His own importance. "I am not like others."

The Publican was humble when he prayed- v14
"God be merciful" And God heard His prayer.
The only right approach to God when we appreciate who He is - is a Humble approach.

We feeble men of dust speaking to the almighty God, creator, sustainer, and redeemer of life, the only wise God, Yet we can talk to Him and call Him our Father!

In Isaiah 6 we have a tremendous vision of God He heard the angels say - "Holy Holy Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory" and Isaiah sees himself in the light of God's glory and exclaimed "woe is me for I am undone." v5

This is the sense of awe that we should have. A realisation of our unworthiness should make us humble, but it should not prevent us from praying.

BOLDLY even though we must be humble we can be bold. Heb 4:15-16; - better word -with 'confidence.'

Not because of our own merit, but because we have Jesus as our go between we are seen in His righteousness.

We are unworthy.
We are sinners.
We were in darkness.
He is righteous.
He is the light.
We in Him can be made worthy, righteous, and dwell in God's light.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42;
So we have confidence to ask for things.
We can have confidence when we ask for God's forgiveness. Christians should not feel guilty when they have repented of their sins and sought God's forgiveness. we can have full assurance that we are forgiven. 1 John 1:7-9;

WITH HONESTY. Prayer and honesty go together. Prayer that is effective will always be from a heart open before God, that seeks to be honest with self and open with God. Nor trying to hide anything. True honesty is a very elusive quality.

Dr Leonarde Keeler. The inventor of the 'Lie detector' concluded from testing more than 25 thousand people, that people are basically not honest.

So often we hide from ourselves because we cannot bear to know ourselves as we really are. We blame other people, we blame circumstances, anything to escape the hard facts about our weakness and failings.

ADAM and EVE - Eve blamed the serpent, and Adam blamed Eve. Going before God means leaving aside all alibi's and opening ourselves up before Him. facing God as we are.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; Prayer is not coming to God with a long list of our requests and asking him to agree with us.

Prayer is seeking to understand and submit to God's Will.

Prayer Is Our Expression Of Dependence On God.

He knows what we need even before we ask (Matthew 6:8;).

Yet he still wants us to open our hearts to Him.



Matthew 26:39; "Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.

Yet not as I will, but as you will."

When we pray, we need to have the same attitude as Jesus.

God wants you to make your requests known.

But at the same time to recognize that He knows what we need better than we do. We must surrender to His will. (Isaiah 55:8;)



Telling what we feel:- Even if our faith is weak. Even if we don't feel like praying. Talk to God! It is the only way our prayer can be effective.

We need to remember that while we were enemies God LOVED us enough to send His son to die for us. HOW MUCH MORE now that we are His children will He accept us and love us.

If we own up to our sins and repent of them, God will forgive them. The key to constant fellowship with God is our honest repentance.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; 4. EARNESTLY!

The dictionary says:- "determined, eager to obtain, intent, sincere, serious"

This is the quality of effective prayer.

It really WANTS! It Asks till it gets!, it is determined it does not just ask once and give up, It is eager to obtain- with a deep desire to have - please do this - I want it badly.

Many prayers are not answered because we do not want it badly enough;

We sometimes pray "Lord give me strength to overcome sin - but not while I am still enjoying it!"

Or they are not answered because we are just going through the motions:- indifferent to whether God answers or not.

We need to identify and empathize. For example:"God They need help in India - O God,
I pray for them, it is the burden of my heart,
please be with the people who can help them,
and use me if I can help in any way."

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; 5. IN THE NAME OF JESUS!

The only way to God is through Jesus. John 14:6; Our prayers should be offered up through the name of Jesus. Just sticking it on the end is no good.

We need to be conscious all the time that if it were not for Jesus we could not reach God or speak to Him. 1 Tim 2:5;

When we see the number of times that Jesus prayed, we begin to appreciate the importance, and the necessity, as we strive daily to follow after the perfect example He left for us.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; JESUS PRAYED MUCH.

- 1. At the start of his ministry. Luke 3:21;
- 2. Before the 12 were selected. Luke 6:12;
- 3. After teaching the multitudes. Matt 14:23; Mk 6:46;
- 4. With His disciples. Luke 11:1;
- 5. Early in the morning. Mark 1:33;
- 6. After the last supper. John 17;
- 7. In garden before His crucifixion. Matt 26:36-44;

Lk 22:41-44; John 17;

8. At His death. John 19:30; Lk 23:46;

Many other times Jesus prayed to His Father in heaven. Jesus saw the need of prayer. If He, a sinless man, saw the need of praying so much, surely we can see a greater need for ourselves.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; THE EARLY ASSEMBLY WAS STRONG IN PRAYER.

- 1. The three thousand that were added. Acts 2:41-42;
- 2. Stephen for his enemies. 7:59-60;
- 3. The Jerusalem congregations. 4:23-31;
- 4. The apostles. 6:6;
- 5. Philip and Simon. 8:22-24;
- 6. For Peter in prison. 12:5;
- 7. In Antioch. 13:1-3;
- 8. Paul and Silas in prison. 12:5;
- 9. With the Ephesian elders.
- 10. Paul on His voyage to Rome. 27:35;

20:36;

These congregations were also admonished to pray.

Rome 12:12;

Corinth 7:5;

Ephesus 6:18;

Philippi 4:6-7;

Colosse 4:2;

Thessalonica 5:17;

Moving on from these Bible examples, that we would do well to follow after, we now turn to ourselves — to see how we might best make use of this great privilege of speaking to our Father.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; WE MUST APPROACH GOD:-

- 1. As a child to a father. Matt 7:7-11; 6:9;
- 2. Boldly to obtain mercy. Heb 4:16;
- 3. Through Jesus. **John 14: 6; Eph 2:18;**
- 4. In Faith. Matt 21:22; James 1:6-7; Mark 11:24;
- 5. In secret. Matt 6:5-8;

NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE.

- 1. Jesus put God first. Mark 14:36;
- 2. He did the will of God. John 6:38;
- 3. We must seek the will of God. Matt 6:33;
- 4. We must not ask selfishly. James 4:3;
- 5. We must ask according to God's will. 1 Jn 5:14;

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; BE CONSTANT IN PRAYER!

- 1. As Jesus was. Heb 5:7;
- 2. As we should be always.Lk 18:1-7; Mk 7:25-30;
- 10:46-52;
- 3. At all times. Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17;
- 4. For each other. Jn 15:7;
- 5. For all things. Phil 4:6;

GOD'S PROMISE TO ANSWER PRAYER IS CONDITIONAL - WE MUST:-

- 1. Be righteous. 1 Pet 3:12; Psa 34:15; Prov 15:29;
- 2. Be obedient. 1 John 3:22-24;
- 3. Be merciful to others. Matt 6:15;
- 4. Be living in Christ. John 15:7;
- 5. Pray in the name of Jesus. Jn 14:13-14; Col 3:17;

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; WE MUST BELIEVE PRAYER CHANGES THINGS!

1. Examples.

Hannah. 1 Sam 1:27;

Hezekiah. 2 King 19:19;

Samuel. 1 **Sam** 7:7-9;

Jehoshaphat. 2 Chron 18:31;

Solomon. 1 King 9:3; Ezra 8:23;

Elijah. 1 King 18:37;

The early assembly. Acts 4:31;

Zacharias. Luke 1:13;

2. Promises:- James 5:16-18; Matt 21:21-22; John 15:7; And many more.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; SOME THINGS WE SHOULD PRAY FOR!

- 1. Each other. 1 Thess 5:25;
- 2. Forgiveness of sins. Mt 6:12; Acts 8:22f; 1Jn 5:16;
- 3. For help in time of temptation. Matt 6:13; 26:41;
- 4. For daily needs. Matt 6:11; Phil 4:6, 19;
- 5. For rulers. 1 Tim 2:1-2;
- 6. For the sick. Jam 5:14;
- 7. For enemies. Matt 5:44; Lk 23:34; Acts 7:60;
- 8. For labourers to enter the harvest. Matt 9:38;
- 9. For preachers, and the Lord's word. 2 Thess 3:1;
- 10. For God's children. Phil 1:9-11; Jn 17:9; Lk 22:32;
- 11. For God's will to be done. Matt 22:19; Eph 5:20;

Mk 14:26;

12. For thankfulness. Lk 22:19; Eph 5:20; Mk 14:26;

Prayer is not only the expression of gratitude and need, but is a high and beautiful expression of trust and submission and union with God.

Let us pray so as to be understood by God, and others when praying publicly. 1 Cor 14:9;

V42 "and they were continually devoting themselves in the teaching of the apostles, and the fellowship, and the breaking of the bread, and the prayers."

God-centered!

Corporate prayer:-

A sharing together in common concerns and needs, a bonding together of minds.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; PRAYER & TEACHING.

These are the two things that were consistently observed in assemblies.

Acts 2:42; "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine ... and in the prayers."

Acts 5:42: "Daily in the temple and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus Christ." (Cf. Acts 20:7;)

Acts 4:23-31; Records a prayer of an assembled group of Christians.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; PRAYER & TEACHING.

The public teachers & prayer leaders were to speak one at a time in the assemblies.

1 Cor 14:27; "When men want to speak, let them do so ... each in turn." Why?

1 Cor 14:33; Because God is not the author of confusion. Besides that:-

1 Cor 14:13-19 & 29-31; Refer to How the teaching and prayer was to be intelligible.

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42; CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE PRAYERS. (Acts 2:42;)

Notice that expression.

THE PRAYERS. Not 'in PRAYER';

Not that they kept on PRAYING - and we know that they did that. But THE PRAYERS.

Brethren have been know to PRAY AT each other - not FOR each other, or WITH each other. Prayer has become a WEAPON used against each other, instead of a weapon with which to fight the Devil.

1Peter 5:8-9; "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

God knows this enemy better than we do.
We must trust God and rely on His guidance.



First and Most Let us pray—first! Travelling to help the hungry? Be sure to bathe our mission in prayer. Weary of a world of racism and division? So is God. And He would love to talk with us about it.

Let's pray most! Did God call us to preach without ceasing? Or teach without ceasing? Or have committee meetings without ceasing? Or sing without ceasing? No, but He did call us to "pray without ceasing." (I Thess 5:17;)

Did Jesus declare:- My house shall be called a house of study? Fellowship? Singing? A house of activities? No, but he did say:-"My house will be called a house of prayer" (Mark 11:17;).

Jesus said, "When two of you get together on anything and make a prayer of it, my Father in heaven goes into action." (Matthew 18:19;) So, Pray! Pray first and Pray most!

WORSHIP - THE PRAYERS? Acts 2:42;
The Christian life is like a race,
not a sprint, but a marathon.
Our faithfulness to the end
is vital to our eternal destiny.

Seeking godly teachers and strong Christian fellowship is crucial; otherwise, you could be deceived and led away from God.



WORSHIP - CONTINUED STEADFASTLY? Acts 2:42; QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION ON PRAYER.

- 1. Is it good to pray aloud?
- 2. Do you find it hard to pray?
- 3. Are you growing in prayer?
- 4. How often and for how long should you pray?
- 6. How does God answer prayer.?
- 7. Is there any value in reading prayers? (from a prayer book etc.)
 - 8. Would having a prayer list help you?

WORSHIP - CONTINUED STEADFASTLY? Acts 2:42; HOME WORK

Memorise:- Paul's prayer for the Colossians 1:9-14; and write down the forms of prayer he includes. "Prayer makes the Christian armour bright." "Satan trembles when He sees a Christian on his knees." "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." (Tennyson)

"Families that pray together - stay together."

"God promises us bread,
but sometimes He gives us cake."

WORSHIP - CONTINUED STEADFASTLY? Acts 2:42;

Jesus sends
The Holy Spirit
to indwell His people.

Apostles. Teaching. (The Bible.)

Fellowship and harmony among believers.

Breaking of The Bread.

The Prayers.

A fruitful Assembly that is pleasing to God Witnesses of Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

WORSHIP - CONTINUED STEADFASTLY? Acts 2:42;

Many of these things that we have studied are under attack today!

Sunday meeting together!
Giving as part of our worship
on the first day of the week! Etc.

We need to remember the example of the early assembly.

May we continue steadfastly in its footsteps may every congregation today be characterized by these features at least.

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Next in the series:Sing and Melody.