

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Luke 11:1

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Almost everyone has said a "prayer" at one time or other and for different reasons. What is praying? Why pray? Pray to whom? What is the most important reason for prayer? Some pray to seek God's guidance and some to thank God, some want to be closer to God, some to pray for others, some to want their lives to be better and then there are those who just don't really know why they pray. So, why pray? What is the purpose of prayer? Someone summed up the purpose of prayer with an acronym = ACTS.

I. "A" IS FOR ADORATION

1. Expressing Adoration because:
 - God is certainly worthy of one's praise and his/her adoration.
 - As one can praise God in singing, He can also be praised in prayer.
2. The Bible is full of examples of people praying in Adoration:
 - As Paul prayed for the people of Ephesus, he included praise to God. (Ephesians 3:14-21)
 - In many places it is recorded of David offering adoration and praise to God.
(1 Chronicles 29:10-13)

II. "C" IS FOR CONFESSION

1. No question about it every person needs to confess his/her sins.
 - Mercy from God can come as a result of one confessing his/her sins. (Proverbs 28:13)
 - Christians enjoy the cleansing of their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ by confessing their sins.
(1 John 1:7-10)
2. The Bible records many accounts of people confessing their sins.
 - Jesus told of two men praying, one was a Pharisee and the other was a publican. One was heard by God and the other was not. (Luke 18:10-14)
 - Again the man, David, a man of prayer, is an example of confessing one's sins. (Psalm 51:1-13)
3. Today, forgiveness comes upon one confessing his/her sins through the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 14:6)
 - For those who have put on Christ (Christians) prayer is necessary to remain forgiven.
(Galatians 3:27)

III. "T" IS FOR THANKSGIVING

1. Every person has cause to go to God in thanksgiving and should do so daily.
 - Of all the reasons to go to God in prayer, being thankful is one of the primary reasons.
(Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)
 - One of the most important helps in being anxious is to pray for everything with thanksgiving.
(Philippians 4:6)
2. Again the Bible gives examples of those who offered prayers of thanksgiving.
 - Jesus is the supreme example of praying with thanksgiving. (Matthew 11:25; 26:27; John 6:11; 11:41)
 - Daniel went to God in prayer three times a day in thanksgiving. (Daniel 6:10)

3. If one expects and wants God to be of help in the future, then he/she must express thankfulness to God for the times He has already helped and blessed.

IV. "S" IS FOR SUPPLICATION (Humble Requests)

1. God is not to be commanded or ordered to do anything but in gentle, heart felt, humble requests one asks.
 - God and His Word encourages His Children to let their requests be know to Him. (Philippians 4:6)
 - Christians are to go to God on behalf of others. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
2. The Bible reveals examples of others making supplication to God.
 - "Widows" made requests, supplications to God day and night. (1 Timothy 5:5)
 - Solomon, in building the Temple for God, made requests, supplications of God. (1 Kings 8:28:29)
 - Remember Jesus on the cross made requests.
 - Stephen, when he was being stoned to death, made requests. (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:59-60)

CONCLUSION:

1. ACTS should help everyone in their prayer life:
 - Adoration
 - Confession
 - Thanksgiving
 - Supplication
2. Everyone prays at one time or other for one reason or the other and it would be a great help if everyone understands the real purpose of prayer and what it takes for God to hear and answer one's prayer.
3. How often do YOU pray? When you do pray, are you serious or do you just say a bunch of words?
4. Follow Jesus' example in prayer.